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Ministerie van
Binnenlandse Zaken en
Koninkrijksrelaties

Salafism in the Netherlands

A passing phenomenon or a persistent factor of significance?

Summary

Goal of the report

The goal of this report is to give an overview of (the development of) Saudi-inspired salafism in the Netherlands, with a description of its key characteristics. Such an overview was previously not available. In addition, the report will highlight those developments which will be of importance in determining the future of salafism in the Netherlands.

From desert Islam to global Islam

Salafism is an ultra-orthodox school of thought within Islam, which favours a return to 'pure Islam' as it was practised at the time of the prophet Mohammed and by the four righteous caliphs in the first centuries after Mohammed. Up to the 1970s, salafism was a marginal orientation within Sunni Islam, and was to be found primarily on the Arabian Peninsula. From that time onward, salafism began to spread beyond the borders of Saudi Arabia and developed into a worldwide movement, predominantly as a result of its missionary zeal. In western Europe, salafism has flourished primarily from the 1990s onwards.

Three divergent factions

There are three significant factions within salafism today: apolitical salafists, political salafists and jihadist (violent) salafists. These ideological differences are visible in the Netherlands as well. The apolitical and political factions are also referred to as non-violent salafism in this report.

Non-violent salafism in the Netherlands

In the period from 1986 to 2001 non-violent Salafism was able to work, unobserved, on building an infrastructure. During this period four centres were established which largely determine the image of this variant in the Netherlands. These centres are:

- the El-Tawheed Foundation in Amsterdam and the El-Tawheed mosque linked to it;
- the Al-Waqf al-Islami Foundation in Eindhoven and the Al-Fourkaan mosque linked to it;
- the As-Sunnah Foundation in The Hague and the As-Sunnah mosque linked to it;
- the Islamic Foundation for Education and Transmission of Knowledge (ISOOK: *Islamitische Stichting voor Opvoeding en Overdracht van Kennis*) in Tilburg, which is also linked to a mosque. All these centres have been directly or indirectly

established with efforts from Saudi Arabia. The leadership of Al Waqf and the Al-Fourkaan is loyal to the Saudi royal family, and as such must be classified as apolitical. The most important imams of the El-Tawheed, the As-Sunnah and the ISOOK represent the political faction. In 2001 these three mosques established the Foundation for the Islamic Committee for Ahl-Sunnah in the Netherlands (*Stichting Islamitisch Comité voor Ahl-Soennah in Nederland*). As a general rule, all centres can be said to focus on the spread of da'wa (ministry and missionary work).

The quiet anonymity in which the non-violent Salafists were able to build up their infrastructure came to an abrupt end in 2002. In that year, reports appeared for the first time in the media about the anti-integration and radical message being disseminated by the imams in these centres. In addition, during that year various people suspected of being involved in the preparation of terrorist activities were arrested; these were regular attendees of the Al-Fourkaan mosque. The events of 2002, as well as new developments which were to follow in the years thereafter, led to great social and political pressure on the centres, which continues to the present day. Despite this pressure, the ideological influence of these four centres has greatly increased since the start of 2005.

This external pressure did, however, result in the fact that the four centres have publicly taken a more moderate approach. In particular after the murder of Theo van Gogh on 2 November 2004, these centres have felt obliged to publicly distance themselves from jihadists who wish to resort to violence in the Netherlands. They also increasingly acknowledge the problem of radicalisation and recruitment in their own circle. It is also noticeable that the centres are attempting ever more actively to influence their perceived image by stating that they form a buffer against jihadism.

Violent jihad in the Netherlands

The 1990s saw the start of an evolution within the jihadist faction of salafism in the Netherlands. The first manifestation of this faction emerged at the beginning of the 1990s. The use of the migration channel by jihadists has played a crucial role in this respect. The asylum channel in particular formed a relatively easy way for jihadists to gain access to the Netherlands. Around 1997, Jihadists who took refuge in the Netherlands sought, and found, affiliation with the long-established Muslim communities in this country, facilitated by the previously mentioned centres. The centres were the ideal meeting place for establishing contacts with fellow believers, and then with the second- and third-generation Moroccans in particular.

The first jihadist networks in the Netherlands emerged around 1999. These networks were initially oriented towards supporting and facilitating international jihad. The Netherlands itself was neither a target nor a subject of interest for these networks. Beginning in 2002, the emergence in the Netherlands of local jihadist networks which wished to carry out violent jihad in the Netherlands as well became an issue. They organised their own training and education programmes outside the four centres, in living rooms for instance. Development of the first Dutch-language jihadist literature was initiated for this purpose. The use of the Internet within these circles further accelerated the processes of development and dissemination of the jihadist ideology in Dutch society.

From the end of 2006 onwards, the strength of local jihadist networks in the Netherlands declined, due to a divide between the intention and the potential of identified jihadist individuals and networks in the Netherlands. This divide is primarily the result of governmental action against jihadist networks as well as a lack of discipline and leadership within the local networks themselves. A lack of operational capacities is another reason for the reduction in the strength of local networks. Future developments within these networks could, however, reverse this reduction in strength.

Risks posed by salafism

The foundations of salafism are at odds with the basic principles of the Dutch constitutional state. Without a doubt, salafist forces in the Netherlands have in the past expressed views which, quite simply, clash with the Dutch democratic legal system. Sermons by (a)political imams expressed extreme disapproval of integration, called for intolerance and isolationism and even rejection of laws which had been established in a democratic manner. They also demonstrated an extremely anti-western ideology and evoked the image of an Islam which is threatened by 'enemies of Islam'. In the case of the jihadist faction even the use of violence is acceptable to undermine democracy in order to ultimately establish an Islamic state.

As previously stated, we can see that since 2002 the (a)political salafists have – at least in public - taken a moderate stance. The General Intelligence and Security Service (AIVD), however, regards this moderation as a political façade. According to the Service, the political salafists present themselves to the outside world as much more moderate than they are in reality.

Explanations for the rise of salafism

Three central concepts are distinguished in this report which play a role in the rise of salafism in the Netherlands (and beyond): injustice, identity and social cohesion. Salafists play upon feelings of *injustice* primarily by emphasising and affirming that Christians and Jews *consciously* attack Islam. Subsequently, salafists offer, as an alternative, a new *identity* to young people in the west who are searching for their own identity. The appeal of this new salafist identity is that it offers youths something to hold onto in a complex and modern western society in which these youths feel ostracised. Finally, the salafists provide the youths with group connections in which they do feel safe and accepted (*social cohesion*).

Development trajectories of salafism in the Netherlands

Six crucial developments are indicated in the present report which will be decisive for the future of salafism in the Netherlands, i.e.:

- *Moderation and adaptation*: The question raised in this report is how the moderation which has been observed within non-violent salafism should be interpreted. In this regard it is argued that said moderation – whether sincere or not – is a positive development. Namely, it demonstrates that the previously mentioned four centres are not immune to their environment. They are increasingly seeking interaction with their ('unbelieving') environment. The question is whether this moderation will persist even if the external pressure is eliminated or lessened.
- *Non-violent salafism as a social factor*: It seems that non-violent salafism has developed into an actual social factor. Over time this variant may even develop into a factor of significance which society will have to learn to live with. The fragmentation of the salafist message, however, also means that it is not probable that such a thing as one single salafist faction will emerge.
- *Resilience of the jihadist faction of salafism*: The question arises as to just how resilient the jihadist faction is in the Netherlands. Will the divide between the intention and the potential of jihadist networks in the Netherlands, as observed in this report, persist? Which effects will the arrest and detention of jihadists have on the development of the jihadist faction in the Netherlands in the long term? Will the Dutch jihadists succeed in gaining greater autonomy in their ideological know-how? The answer to these questions will be decisive for the development of jihadism in the Netherlands.
- *European Muslims' link to hotbeds of conflict*: Salafists play upon Muslims' feelings of dissatisfaction and frustration about international conflicts in which Muslims are

involved. The question is whether European Muslims (including Dutch Muslims) will follow the developments in the Middle East at a greater distance or whether the current strong connection to their fellow believers will remain intact.

- *Effects of developments in Saudi Arabia on Dutch salafism:* Another question is what impact developments in Saudi Arabia will have on salafism in the Netherlands. The Saudi state's cautious willingness to redress the excesses of salafism may be particularly relevant in this regard. This latter point may further promote the moderation which has been observed in the Netherlands.
- *Discord diffuses the salafists' message:* The increased discord which exists among Saudi salafists is also visible in the Netherlands. This divide may over time stand in the way of da'wa in the Netherlands. Discord weakens the power of the salafist message in the sense that the apparently all-encompassing and clear salafist message becomes more diffuse.

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Introduction

Goal of the report

This report discusses Saudi-inspired salafism in the Netherlands. This radical Islamic ideology has drawn the uninterrupted attention of Dutch society, politics and the media since 2002. It has become almost synonymous in its perceived image with the preaching of intolerance and hatred. For some people it is even equivalent to Islamic terrorism. The present report intends to give an overview of (the development of) salafism in the Netherlands. Such an overview was not previously available.

Terminology

Saudi-inspired salafism can be divided into a violent and a non-violent variant. This report discusses both variants. For the sake of the report's readability, rather than continually referring to 'the non-violent variant of salafism', simply 'salafism' will be used. At all places where the text refers to the violent variant, this will be specifically indicated. Whenever this point of reference is deviated from, the reader will be made aware of this.

Central question and structure of the report

As indicated above, this report encompasses the following central question:

- What is known about (the development of) Saudi-inspired salafism in the Netherlands?

This question, and its related components, is aimed at both variants within salafism.

These questions will be answered in seven chapters:

- In Chapter One an outline will be given of the historical development of 'pure Islam' in order to be able to place (the two variants within) current salafism in an historical context.
- Chapter Two presents a picture of the infrastructure of non-violent salafism in the Netherlands, and describes its key characteristics.
- Chapter Three will provide an historic reconstruction of the emergence of non-violent salafism in the Netherlands.
- Chapter Four will present an overview of the emergence of violent jihad in the Netherlands in its key characteristics.
- Virtual jihad is the central focus of Chapter Five.
- Chapter Six will discuss the attraction of Salafism for certain groups or individuals,

- and the manifestation and the scope of (both variants within) salafism.
- Chapter Seven will examine in greater detail those developments – as identified in previous chapters – which will be decisive for the future of (both variants within) salafism in the Netherlands.

1. 'Pure Islam': from desert Islam to global phenomenon

1.1 Historical development of 'pure Islam' in outline

In this chapter an *outline* will be given of the historical development of so-called 'pure Islam' to enable us to place the current generation of salafists in the Netherlands within an historical context. Characteristic for this 'pure Islam' is the emphasis which is placed on the earliest period of Islam as a source of inspiration for resolving political, economic and social problems (see also Section 1.2.1).¹ In this chapter the terms 'salafism' and 'salafists' refer to both the violent and non-violent variants of salafism.

Ahmad Ibn Hanbal (780-855)

Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, a legal scholar, is the founder of Hanbalism. Hanbalism is the most conservative of the four schools of law within Sunni Islam.² This school of jurisprudence is characterised by its desire to rid Islam of foreign influences. It also rejects the idea of subjecting Islamic sources to interpretation. All questions can and must be answered in reference to the literal text of the Koran and the hadith³ and possibly with the aid of binding pronouncements which were issued by Mohammed's companions. This very puritanical school is most prevalent on the Arabian peninsula.

Ahmad Ibn Hanbal was the first to invoke Islam's 'glorious' earliest period as a source of inspiration.⁴ He regarded a return to this earliest period as *the* solution for the politico-religious disputes which existed in the Muslim community of his time. Ibn Hanbal acquired his name by remaining unwaveringly bound to the literal interpretation of the Koran and Sunnah⁵. In this way he became a symbol of resistance against the pretensions of the human mind. He suffered persecution and imprisonment as a result of his ideas.

1 Samir Amghar, *Le salafisme en Europe: la mouvance polymorphe d'une radicalisation*, [Salafism in Europe : The polymorphic movement of a radicalisation process] in: *Politique étrangère* 1 :2006.

2 The other three schools of law are: the Hanafite, Shafi'ite and Maliki schools.

3 Hadith are traditions originating from words and deeds attributed to the prophet Mohammed and his companions.

4 Samir Amghar, *Le salafisme en Europe: la mouvance polymorphe d'une radicalisation*, [see footnote 1, above] in : *Politique étrangère* 1 :2006.

5 Behaviour and statements by the prophet Mohammed, handed down in the hadith, which serves as examples for the behaviour of religious practitioners.

Ibn Taymiya (1263-1328)

Ahmed Ibn Taymiya is considered one of the most important Hanbalist legal scholars. Indeed, he is also called the founder of modern Hanbalism. In emulation of Ibn Hanbal, he also rejected interpretation. He advocated that Muslims should return to the Koran and the Sunnah of the prophet Mohammed and wanted to rid Islam of all foreign influences. Taymiya stood at the cradle of the *takfir*⁶ *al-hakim*.⁷ He argued that it was permitted to denounce Islamic rulers and to declare them apostate if these rulers did not fully practise *shari'a*⁸. In Islam, apostasy is punishable by death. As did his great predecessor, Ibn Hanbal, Taymiya also suffered persecution and imprisonment for his ideas. His influence extends into modern times via the Wahhabite movement on the Arabian peninsula (see below). The fact that he remained true to his convictions makes him an important source of inspiration for the present salafist movement.

Mohammed Ibn Abd al-Wahhaab (1703-1792)

Mohammed Ibn Abd al-Wahhaab is the spiritual founder of Wahhabism. Abd al-Wahhaab was tutored by his father in Islamic law as practised by the Hanbalist school. He later formed an alliance with Mohammed bin Saud (died 1765), whose descendants founded the present kingdom of Saudi Arabia.⁹ Wahhabism was established as the official religion in the regions which the Saud conquered. The core of the alliance is that the clergy supports and reinforces the legitimacy of the Saud family's power via Islam, and that in exchange the royal family gives the clergy control of social issues and of morality.

Wahhabism strives for a return to 'pure Islam'. The concept of the 'uniqueness and unity of God' (*tawheed*) is central to Wahhabism. The Koran is to be read literally, while innovation (*bid'a*) is rejected. Wahhabism advocates a full implementation of *shari'a* law and a very faithful emulation of the prophet Mohammed's actions and conduct. The new step taken by the Wahhabites is that they did not only declare rulers to be heretics and apostates, but declared as *kafir* any Muslim who did not support their actions and

6 Takfir means excommunication, by which a Muslim or a group of Muslims are declared 'infidels'. Along with this condemnation, the infidel is also declared an outlaw: every true Muslim has the duty to kill this person.

7 Hans Jansen, *De radicaal-islamitische ideologie: van Ibn Taymiyya tot Osama ben Laden* [The radical-islamitic ideology: van Ibn Taymiyya to Osama ben Laden], text of the speech given on 3 February, 2004, University of Utrecht.

8 Shari'a is the system of Islamic laws which are derived from the Koran.

9 Today's Saudi Arabia was founded in 1932 by King Abdul Aziz bin Saud.

aspirations.¹⁰ This latter principle is known as *takfir al-gumhur*.

The early salafists (late 19th/early 20th century)

At the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, a reform movement emerged in Egypt which called itself *salafiyya*. 'Salaf' means 'the path of the pious ancestors'. The salafiyya movement originated as a reaction to western colonialism and western domination in the field of culture, politics and science. The movement saw a return to the 'pure Islam' as practised by the prophet Mohammed's first successors as a way to end colonialism and for Muslims to regain their 'traditional superiority'. Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1839-1897) was the founder of this movement. Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905) and Muhammad Rashid Rida (1865-1935) were his two most important followers.

The early salafists did not reject western modernity. On the contrary, they thought that 'pure Islam' could be reconciled with technological and industrial progress. They also argued that the west's modern technology and empirical sciences were essential for the Muslim world if the latter wished to regain its independence. They also advocated reinterpretation of the original Islamic texts and reintroduction of shari'a.¹¹ Rida took the liberal ideas of al-Afghani and Abduh and developed them under a more conservative orientation.¹² Though he viewed Saudi Wahhabism negatively, over the course of time he did develop more sympathy for this religious school of thought.¹³ When Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881-1938) – the founder of modern Turkey – did away with the Ottoman caliphate, Rida saw in the Wahhabite Saudi rulers a possibility to reinstate the caliphate.¹⁴

The early salafists were of great influence on the philosophy of modern Islamic movements, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood being considered the most important

10 Hans Jansen, *De radicaal-islamitische ideologie: van Ibn Taymiyya tot Osama ben Laden* [see footnote 7 above] text of the speech given on 3 February, 2004, University of Utrecht.

11 Hans Jansen, *De radicaal-islamitische ideologie: van Ibn Taymiyya tot Osama ben Laden* [see footnote 7 above], text of the speech given on 3 February, 2004, University of Utrecht.

12 Jacques Waardenburg (co-author), *Islam: Norm, ideaal en werkelijkheid*, 2000 [Islam, the standard, the ideal, and the reality, 2000].

13 Christopher Henzel, *The Origins of AL-Qaeda's ideology: Implications for US Strategy*, in: Parameter, 2005.

14 Hans Jansen, *De radicaal-islamitische ideologie: van Ibn Taymiyya tot Osama ben Laden* [see footnote 7 above], text of the speech given on 3 February, 2004, University of Utrecht.

representatives among these.¹⁵ These modern movements, however, primarily emphasised the reintroduction and application of shari'a law. Some of the early salafists' other – more modern – ideas were not adopted.

1.2 Saudi-inspired salafism in the 20th century

In the twentieth century the early form of salafism increasingly came under the influence of Saudi Wahhabism.¹⁶ These days, the terms Wahhabism and salafism are used interchangeably. This chapter will first examine Saudi-inspired salafism in greater detail. Next, the key characteristics of the three most important orientations within modern salafism will be discussed.¹⁷

1.2.1 Modern salafism examined in greater detail

Saudi-inspired salafism subscribes to the 'pure Islam' of Hanbalism, Ibn Taymiya, Wahhabism and also, in part, the early salafists (*only* as regards their emphasis on a return to Islam's earliest period). Five characteristics of modern salafism will be discussed in the following; these are characteristics with which the reader must be familiar for proper comprehension of this report.¹⁸

Return to Islam's earliest period

The salafists promote a 'pure Islam', one which is as absolutely pure as possible, as it was practised at the time of the prophet Mohammed and by the four righteous caliphs in the first centuries after the establishment of Mohammed's teachings.¹⁹ Their aim is the reconstruction of Islam's authentic (mythical) earliest period. Later historical developments are rejected as expressions of modernisation. The same applies to the various adaptations to local traditions and customs which took place everywhere that Islam spread. The (largely geographical) division of the Muslim community into different schools of law is also repudiated.

15 The Oxford encyclopedia of the modern Islamic world/John L. Esposito, ed. in chief; [ed.: Shahrough Akhavi ... et. al.]

16 General Intelligence and Security Service, *Van Da'wa tot Jihad* [From Da'wa to Jihad], 2004.

17 The terms 'Saudi-inspired salafism' and 'modern salafism' are used interchangeably in this report.

18 It is beyond the scope of this report to give a complete overview of the religious principles within salafism and other relevant topics within this school of thought.

19 H. De Ley, *Muslims in de Europese, i.c. Belgische, Lekenstaat* [Muslims in the European, -and specifically the Belgian - secular society], 2006.

The demand to conform to the example set by the prophet Mohammed's first followers means that salafists take the relevant Koranic texts so literally and strictly that any further interpretation is no longer permitted.²⁰ Any reflection on the holy texts is frowned upon and they regard all interpretations of these texts which have been made since the seventh century to be in error. Thus religion is transformed into a prescribed, universal code of conduct.²¹

Rejection of interpretation

For salafists, perhaps the greatest threat to 'pure Islam' is subjecting the original Islamic sources to interpretation. According to the salafist ideology, there is only *one* truth, and that is the truth as recorded in the Koran and Sunnah. This unique truth makes any interpretation superfluous. Subjecting this to interpretation will, according to salafists, only lead to error. Thus modern salafists also foster antipathy towards the early salafists, who did permit interpretation; they regard them as deviants whose teachings threatened the practice of 'pure Islam'.

Tawheed (Uniqueness/Unity of God)

At the core of the salafist belief system is *tawheed*.²² This principle encompasses three components:

1. God is the only creator.
2. God is the Supreme Being and unique. Only God can make laws.
3. Only God may be worshipped.

The concept of *tawheed* entails that the salafists reject democracy as well as separation of church and state.²³ For salafists, these are concepts which were created by Man.

Wala'wa-l-bara (Loyalty and aversion)

The principle of *wala'wa-l-bara* (or *Wala'a-Baraa*) is a central concept within salafism. This concept entails that Muslims must maintain mutual solidarity and must display aversion towards non-Muslims. According to this concept, a Muslim must, fundamentally and unconditionally, support his fellow believers and adopt an antagonistic attitude towards non-Muslims. The 'religious brotherhood' emerges, as it

20 Scientific Council for Government Policy, *Dynamism in Islamic Activism*, 2006.

21 H. De Ley, *Muslims in de Europese, i.c. Belgische, Lekenstaat* [see footnote 10 above], 2006.

22 Quintan Wiktorowicz, *Anatomy of the Salafi Movement*, in: *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 2006.

23 See also: Quintan Wiktorowicz, *Anatomy of the Salafi Movement*, in: *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 2006.

were, from this mutual loyalty among Muslims. Muslims are connected to each other by their religion and not on the basis of ethnicity or nationality. This concept of *Loyalty and aversion* may form the basis for intolerance towards non-Muslims.

Jihad

Another important principle within salafism is *jihad*. Whenever this report discusses (violent) jihad, this refers to “the activities of violence which are aimed at perceived enemies of Islam for the purpose of realising a world which is a reflection, as pure as possible, of that which is believed to be indicated in the earliest sources of the Islamic religion”. This is also known as ‘the lesser jihad’. In addition to this, there is also the so-called ‘greater jihad’. This has to do with the individual’s effort to control himself and to cleanse himself of evil. This ‘greater jihad’ will not be dealt with in the present report.

1.2.2 *Difference in strategy, not in belief*

Up to now this report has discussed a violent (jihadist) and a non-violent variant within Saudi-inspired salafism. The non-violent variant can, however, be divided yet again into an apolitical and a political faction.²⁴ The jihadist, the apolitical and the political factions can be regarded as three competing factions. In this regard, it can be said that the difference between the various factions is not a religious one.²⁵ All the factions take as their basis the same original Islamic sources and the same scholars. The differences lie primarily in the field of strategy. Wiktorowicz (2006) explains this as follows:

‘The split is not in thought; it is in strategy... The divergences lie in the inherently subjective nature of applying a creed to new issues and problems. This is a human enterprise and therefore subject to differing interpretations of context.’

The following sections will provide a reconstruction of the historical development of these three factions as they took place in Saudi Arabia, whereby the difference in strategy will become clear.

Apolitical salafists

In establishing their alliance in the 18th century, Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhaab and Muhammad bin Saud agreed that political power would be subordinate to religious

24 This distinction cannot always be sharply drawn. Typology then must be regarded primarily as an instrument to somewhat reduce reality’s complexity.

25 Quintan Wiktorowicz, *Anatomy of the Salafi Movement*, in: *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 2006.

authority.²⁶ Over the course of time, however, the Saudi state had to make pragmatic choices, primarily due to its dependence on foreign powers, which put pressure on this agreement. Over time, the clergy yielded to the authority of the political leaders (the House of Saud), and developed a more apolitical salafism. Intervention in political affairs is now in fact regarded as innovation (*bid'a*). This does not, however, change the fact that apolitical salafists have considerable influence on the state's policymaking and are also in control of the Council of Senior Ulema (Scholars).²⁷

Apolitical salafists primarily concern themselves with maintaining the purity of Islam by carrying out da'wa (preaching and missionary work), which is why they are also known as puritans. The return to 'pure Islam' is viewed by these puritans as cutting away everything which, in their eyes, has tarnished Islam.²⁸ This obsession with maintaining 'pure Islam' has also led to a strong isolationist tendency.²⁹ This means that apolitical salafists are not quick to engage in dialogue with those of other beliefs, and also try to put physical distance between themselves and non-Muslims (ghettoisation). They regard Christians and, in particular, Jews as enemies of Islam. As an extension of this, they also reject western influences and concepts (such as democracy).

The differences within the salafist community represent in part a dispute over the question of who has authority to apply the religious sources to current issues on behalf of the Muslim community.³⁰ For the puritans, the old guard of scholars dominates. They attempt to monopolise religious authority by declaring that they alone have the knowledge, expertise and experience to be able to judge complex modern issues. The other two factions dispute this, as will become apparent in the course of this chapter.

26 Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research, *Projectplan salafisme-onderzoek* [Project plan for research on Salafism], 2006.

27 The Council of Scholars is the highest religious authority in Saudi Arabia. The members of this council are appointed and paid by the state. They commonly support the position of those in power.

28 General Intelligence and Security Service, *Van Da'wa tot Jihad* [see footnote 16, above], 2004.

29 Quintan Wiktorowicz, *Anatomy of the Salafi Movement*, in: *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 2006.

30 Idem.

Ultimately, the puritans' apolitical character can be questioned as well. Buijs (2006) correctly observes that the puritans legitimise governmental actions through issuing fatwas.³¹ This means that the apolitical salafists are connected to the Saudi government, and there can be no mention of a purely apolitical position here. In this regard, it would be better to speak of 'state-allied salafists' rather than 'apolitical salafists'. However, this report will continue using the term 'apolitical salafists' because this has now become the common term.

Political salafists

Saudi-inspired salafism was relatively homogeneous for a long period of time. The arrival during the 1950s of members of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood³² – Muslim Brothers from other Islamic countries would later also seek refuge in Saudi Arabia – undermined this relative unity. The Egyptian Muslim Brothers, who in their own country were persecuted by the government of Gamal Abdel Nasser (1918-1970), found shelter with the apolitical salafists in Saudi Arabia.

From the 1970s onwards, the Muslim Brothers began acquiring important positions in Saudi society. They exerted their influence primarily in the field of education. Another development, one which would later cause the House of Saud a good deal of trouble, is that the Brothers politicised the Saudi clergy. They succeeded in creating awareness about their political Islam on a large scale through education and the distribution of literature. In this way a new generation of mostly young Saudi salafists developed which, in emulation of the Muslim Brothers, showed more interest in (international) politics and did not hesitate to criticise those whom they considered to be un-Islamic leaders. This new generation is referred to as 'political salafists'.³³

From the end of the 1970s onwards, tensions between the apolitical and the political orientations became increasingly apparent. The year 1979 is considered the breaking point in this regard. This was the year that ayatollah Khomeini (1902-1989) established

31 Buijs (co-author), *Strijders van eigen bodem. Radicale en democratische moslims in Nederland*, 2006. [Home Grown Warriors. Radical and democratic Muslims in the Netherlands, 2006].

32 The Muslim Brotherhood was founded in Egypt in 1928 and has expanded into a global movement with branches in various countries. The movement strives to establish an Islamic state (be it an Islamic state in the Muslim world, be it a global caliphate). The movement is strongly influenced by Mohammed Rashid Rida.

33 This movement is also known as the Sahwa movement.

an Islamic republic in Shiite Iran.³⁴ Inspired by Khomeini's stand against the Shah of Iran, in late 1979 several hundred dissidents stormed the holy mosque in Mecca. They demanded an end to the rule of the Saud family, which they accused of corruption and western decadence as well as a lack of legitimacy. Khomeini's anti-western and pro-Shiite position as well as domestic pressure were all reasons for the House of Saud to lead a new Islamisation offensive in order to strengthen their own legitimacy. This did not, however, in any way silence the dissident voices.

The year 1990 constitutes a second breaking point in the development of the politically oriented faction. This is the year that Saddam Hussein (1937-2006) invaded Kuwait. Under pressure from the Saudi rulers, on 14 August, 1990 the apolitical clergy issued a *fatwa*³⁵ in which they legitimised the arrival of American troops. This fatwa caused an enormous shock within the salafist movement in Saudi Arabia and beyond. The stationing of American troops in Saudi territory during the first Gulf War (1991) was ultimately the reason for the apolitical faction to publicly show themselves to be political activists.³⁶ Religious leaders, judges and intellectuals prepared a petition in which they vigorously appealed to the government to restore Islamic values. This petition also included all manner of specific political reformation proposals.

After the above-mentioned fatwa, the contrasts between the apolitical and political factions grew ever sharper. Not only did the political faction condemn the fatwa, it also now publicly rebuked the puritans for their obsession with Islamic rituals and a lack of insight into international issues (which is what supposedly led to the controversial fatwa).³⁷ The apolitical faction argued in response that political intervention is 'un-Islamic behaviour' and poses a threat to *tawheed*. The polemic between both factions continues to this day. The Saudi state is attempting to gain a hold on the political activists through prosecution as well as annexation wherever possible.³⁸

34 Sunni and Shia Islam are the two most important main branches within Islam. Roughly 80% of Muslims are Sunni, about 20% are Shi'ite.

35 A fatwa is an Islamic scholar's (legal) opinion regarding a specific issue.

36 Scientific Council for Government Policy, *Dynamism in Islamic Activism*, 2006.

37 Quintan Wiktorowicz, *Anatomy of the Salafi Movement*, in: *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 2006.

38 Clingendael (Leen Boer), *Saoedi-Arabië, machtig in onmacht: Op weg naar hervorming of naar revolutie* [Saudi Arabia, powerful in vulnerability: Heading towards reform or revolution], January 2005.

Jihadist salafists

In the middle of the 1990s the Saudi government resorted to repression of politically oriented salafists. Various politically oriented salafists were imprisoned, others fled the country. The space they left behind was then occupied by the jihadist faction (*salafiyya jihadiyya*).³⁹ This faction originated in the Afghan war which was waged against the former Soviet Union in the 1980s. During this war, Saudi salafists came in contact with the radical and politicised set of beliefs held by the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and the (violent) splinter groups allied with it. Whereas the political salafists developed their political orientation at the university, the battlefield was where the jihadists became acquainted with political Islam. A faction ultimately emerged which emphasises not only politics but also the armed struggle against the 'enemies' of Islam. The repressive action taken by the Saudi government in response to the demands of the political salafists ultimately resulted, in 1995, in jihadists resorting to a jihad on Saudi territory.⁴⁰

The jihadists gave the apolitical salafists the benefit of the doubt during the 1990s.⁴¹ The jihadists claimed – in emulation of the political faction – that the puritans were being misled by the political leaders. The tone changed, however, around the turn of the millennium. The jihadists accused the puritans of collaborating with the Saudi rulers who, supposedly, were deliberately out to eliminate the 'true scholars'. The puritans accused the jihadist- (as well as the politically) oriented salafists of *first* choosing a strategy for change (i.e. an Islamic state or political influence) and then going in search of Islamic sources to substantiate the chosen strategy.

The jihadist faction was greatly inspired by Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966) and Abdullah Azzam (1941-1989).⁴² Taking as a base the concept of God's absolute and exclusive sovereignty, Qutb divided society into two camps: those who obey God and those who do not. This concept of an absolute opposition between good and evil constitutes an important justification for rebellion and struggle. Azzam is considered Osama bin Laden's mentor. If Qutb can be regarded as the father of Islam as an ideology

39 Quintan Wiktorowicz, *Anatomy of the Salafi Movement*, in: *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 2006.

40 www.saudi-us-relations.org.

41 Quintan Wiktorowicz, *Anatomy of the Salafi Movement*, in: *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 2006.

42 Scientific Council for Government Policy, *Dynamism in Islamic Activism*, 2006.

of resistance to domestically repressive regimes,⁴³ Azzam extended this jihad to the external enemies of Islam which he viewed as besieging the Muslim world and which he wished to tackle one by one. He opposed the national orientation of many movements, and viewed the nation state as a product of colonialism.

The term 'takfir' constitutes an important justification for rebellion.⁴⁴ In emulation of Qutb, jihadist and political salafists claim that Islamic leaders (such as the Saudi rulers) can be denounced if they behave in an 'un-Islamic' manner. The puritans reject this principle; they claim that 'actions' are not enough to denounce someone, because you never know whether that person still truly believes in their heart or not. The foregoing indicates that 'takfir' is a disputed concept because there is no agreement on *who* is entitled to pronounce 'takfir' and *which* requirements a proclamation of this kind has to meet.

1.3 Global (transnational) Islam

Salafism has a strong missionary character. It is salafists' religious duty to convert as many people to their faith as possible. Until the 1970s salafists had little success with their missionary activities. Beginning in the 1950s, most Arabs felt primarily drawn to Arabic nationalism, socialism or communism. After losing the wars against Israel (1967 and 1973), the influence of the nationalists and the socialists disappeared. This provided the Saudis with a superb opportunity. The Saudi government *and* private Saudi organisations began using their 'oil dollars'⁴⁵ to gain influence among Muslim communities all over the world (through financing the construction of mosques, establishing educational projects, recruiting imams, etc.).⁴⁶ Charity went hand in hand with missionary zeal in this regard. In the 1980s Saudi Arabia also supplied the Mujahideen fighters in Afghanistan with \$500 million dollars in weapons, via the CIA.⁴⁷

43 As indicated in Section One, Ibn Taymiya initiated the denunciation of Islamic rulers who in his view did not sufficiently exercise shari'a. However, he only denounced the enemies of his masters (the Mamelukes who ruled Egypt and Syria). He never denounced his masters themselves.

44 It was stated in Chapter One that Ibn Taymiya declared Islamic leaders apostate and that Ibn Abd al-Wahhaab even declared everyone kafir who did not agree with him.

45 Oil was discovered in Saudi Arabia in 1938.

46 See also: General Intelligence and Security Service, *Saoedische invloeden in Nederland. Verbanden tussen salafistische missie, radicaliseringsprocessen en islamistisch terrorisme*, [Saudi influences in the Netherlands. Links between the salafist mission, radicalisation processes, and islamistic terrorism], June 2004.

47 Netherlands Institute for War Documentation, *Intelligence en de oorlog in Bosnië 1992-1995*, [Intelligence and the war in Bosnia, 1992-1995], 2002.

Salafism in the Netherlands

It is from this Afghan war against the Soviet army (see Section 1.2.2) that the jihadist faction would later emerge.

In western Europe, Saudi-inspired Salafism burgeoned primarily during the 1990s. In the following chapters we will examine the development of Saudi-inspired salafism in the Netherlands.

2. The most important actors in the salafist Netherlands

2.1 Introduction

As indicated in the previous chapter, Saudi Arabia played an important role in the worldwide spread of salafism. This chapter presents a picture of the key characteristics of the infrastructure of Saudi-inspired salafism in the Netherlands. The four most important salafist organisations – and the mosques linked to them – will be introduced in Section Two. Section Three will deal with other organisations which have a salafist character and a few other organisations will be indicated which are increasingly coming under salafist influence. In closing, Section Four will examine the most important centres in greater detail, whereby their signature, activities and attendees will be dealt with, among other points.

2.2 The four salafist centres

The image of salafism in the Netherlands is largely determined by the four most prominent salafist centres: the El-Tawheed Foundation in Amsterdam, the Al-Waqf al-Islami Foundation in Eindhoven, the As-Sunnah Foundation in The Hague and the Islamic Association for Education and Transmission of Knowledge (ISOOK: *Islamitische Stichting voor Opvoeding en Overdracht van Kennis*) in Tilburg. Information about these centres is given below.

- The El-Tawheed Foundation in Amsterdam was founded in 1986. This means that the foundation (as well as the El-Tawheed mosque associated with it) stood at the cradle of the salafist infrastructure in the Netherlands. The Saudi non-governmental missionary organisation Al Haramain was closely involved in the establishment of this foundation (see also Section 2.3). The Youth Commission (*Jongeren Commissie*) is the official youth organisation of the El-Tawheed Foundation.
- The Al-Waqf al-Islami Foundation (hereafter referred to as Al Waqf) was founded in 1989 in Eindhoven. Al Waqf, the private Saudi missionary organisation, is the parent organisation of this foundation. Al Waqf has branches in various countries; their headquarters are located in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The Al-Fourkaan mosque in Eindhoven is the central location for Al Waqf's activities in the Netherlands.
- The Sounna Foundation (*Stichting Soenna*) in The Hague was established in 1990 and has been known since amendment of the articles of association in 1998 as the

As-Sunnah Foundation/Sheikh al Islam ibn Taymia Centre (*Stichting As-Soennah/Centrum Sheikh al Islam Ibn Taymia*). The foundation was established via indirect efforts from within Saudi Arabia. The image of the As-Sunnah mosque associated with the foundation is determined by imam Fawaz Jneid. Fawaz Jneid is well-known in the Netherlands through his media appearances. The preacher Jamal Ahajjaj (Abu Ismail) is also associated with the mosque; Jamal Ahajjaj plays an important role in the spread of salafism (see Section 3.4).

- The Islamic Association for Education and Transmission of Knowledge (ISOOK: *Islamitische Stichting voor Opvoeding en Overdracht van Kennis*) in Tilburg was established in 2000 via indirect efforts from within Saudi Arabia. A mosque is associated with the organisation. Ahmed Salam is the ISOOK's most important imam and initiator. Salam became famous primarily as the imam who on 20 November, 2004 refused to shake hands with the former Minister for Immigration and Integration (V&I: *Vreemdelingenzaken en Integratie*), Ms R. Verdonk. In salafist circles Salam is regarded as a learned man. He has published various books on religious topics.⁴⁸ The website of the Institute for Teaching and Education (*Instituut voor Opvoeding en Educatie*) (see Section 2.3) characterises Fawaz Jneid and Mahmoud Shershaby as Salam's *pupils*.⁴⁹ This means that Salam is probably the most learned salafist imam in the Netherlands.

2.3 Other salafist organisations

Besides the four salafist centres indicated above, there are a number of other organisations which have a salafist character. These organisations are:

- The Foundation for Islamic Youth in Breda (*Stichting voor Islamitische Jongeren in Breda*), founded on 9 March, 1990 in Breda. In addition to prayer services, conferences and training, activities are also organised at the premises of this foundation – which, according to the General Intelligence and Security Service's 2004 report *Saoedische invloeden in Nederland* (Saudi Influences in the Netherlands) has clear links to Al Waqf. According to its own disclosure, the foundation had 150 paying members in mid-2004.⁵⁰

48 See also: Abdelilah Ljamaal, *Imams in tekst en context: Preken van moslims in Nederland* [Imams in text and context: Sermons of muslims in the Netherlands], 2004.

49 www.ivoe.nl.

50 BN de Stern, *Radicale moslims in Breda* [Radical muslims in Breda], 12 juni 2004.

- The Muslim World League Foundation of the Netherlands (*Stichting Moslim Wereld Liga Nederland*) in Tilburg, a division of the Muslim World League (MWL, in Arabic: Rabita al-Alam al-Islami). The MWL was founded in 1962 in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. The MWL is the most important internationally active Islamic NGO. It is directed and financed from Saudi Arabia. The organisation is represented in various countries, with the goal, among others, of spreading the salafist view of Islam.⁵¹ The Dutch division was established on 11 February, 2000. What is noticeable about this division is that it has kept rather quiet up to the present time.
- Foundation of Muslim Youths Utrecht (SMJU: *Stichting Moslimjongeren Utrecht*), founded on 8 February 2005. The foundation, similar to the other larger centres, is engaged in training and educational activities. According to the founders, this organisation was founded with gifts and donations from Dutch Muslims. As far as is known, the SMJU was founded without any efforts from abroad.
- Bouchta Mosque in Tilburg This mosque, run by imam Bouchta, belongs to the apolitical orientation within salafism. The mosque focuses *exclusively* on orthodox Islam and has a strong internal focus. Also, in an interview with the *Volkskrant* newspaper, Fawaz Jneid calls the Bouchta group 'false guides'.⁵² According to Jneid, "Bouchta is nothing, he has no knowledge. He is the accomplice of the Saudi religious leader Rabeeh, who states that salafists should stay out of politics."
- Imam Bouchta's mosque featured in the news in June of 2006 after it distributed a pamphlet in which suicide attacks were decisively condemned on the basis of fatwas by Islamic scholars. The pamphlet was intended to address the questions which young people had on this point and to offer a counterbalance to the many messages on the Internet which legitimised suicide attacks by invoking Islam.
- Institute for Teaching and Education (IOE: *Instituut voor Opvoeding en Educatie*), founded in October 2006 in Utrecht. The Tilburg youth preacher Suhayb Salam is the institute's initiator; he is the son of Ahmed Salam of the ISOOK. The institute

51 General Intelligence and Security Service, *Saoedische invloeden in Nederland. Verbanden tussen salafistische missie, radicaliseringsprocessen en islamistisch terrorisme*, [see footnote 46 above], June 2004.

52 De Volkskrant, *Salafisme: compromisloos en rechtlijnig, maar 'niet gevaarlijk'* [Salafism: uncompromising and rigidly straightforward, but 'not dangerous'], 5 July, 2005.

offers a foundation programme in Islamology. This is a three-year salafist-oriented programme, taught in Dutch, about Islamic theology and Islamic law. This three-year programme has also been available in Amsterdam since February 2007. The IOE is planning to offer the programme in The Hague as well. According to the IOE's website, the institute is meeting a demand because there are *no* reliable Islamic educational institutes in the Netherlands.⁵³

- Al-Haramain Humanitarian Aid Amsterdam, the Dutch branch of the now disbanded, internationally active Al Haramain missionary organisation. The worldwide spread of salafism was the goal of this NGO. The Dutch branch was founded on 19 October, 1995 and until early 2004 was formally registered at the address of the El-Tawheed Foundation in Amsterdam. Information from the Chamber of Commerce indicates that the Amsterdam branch was removed from the Trade Register and was dissolved as of 18 July, 2006.

Besides the previously mentioned organisations, there are several dozen other (mosque) organisations which are increasingly coming under the influence of the four major centres (see also Section 3.4). It is beyond the scope of this report to give a complete overview of these (mosque) organisations. It should suffice here to indicate the mosques in which this influence is particularly strong at the present time. These are the Al-Muwahiddien mosque in Ede and the Al-Islam mosque in Roermond.

2.4 The four salafist centres examined in greater detail

2.4.1 *Characterization*

As indicated in Chapter Two, salafists promote a 'pure Islam', one which is as absolutely pure as possible, as it was practised at the time of the prophet Mohammed and by the four righteous caliphs in the first centuries after the confirmation of Mohammed. This principle is also applied by the four centres in the Netherlands. For example, the El-Tawheed desires, according to its website, "to return to the Koran and the trustworthy Sunnah and to follow these, as (...) the prophet Mohammed's companions (...) practised them." According to its website, As-Sunnah wishes to "invite people to the Koran and the Sunnah of the Prophet, as these were interpreted by the as-Salaf as-Saalih (the Righteous Forefathers) which belonged to the three best generations which

53 www.ivoe.nl.

have ever existed and which were praised by the Prophet.” In the words of Fawaz Jneid: “What we are attempting in modern society is to form a generation which is almost identical to that of the prophet.”⁵⁴ The other two mosques and imams use similar language.

2.4.2 Attendees

In contrast to most other mosques in the Netherlands, salafist mosques have a multinational membership base. For example, Muslims from North Africa, the Horn of Africa, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Turkey, the Middle East and people of native Dutch heritage all visit the mosques. Moroccans constitute the dominant group within the mosques. The As-Sunnah and the Al-Fourkaan were in fact founded by Moroccans. Over the course of time, they have acquired a more multinational membership base. The El-Tawheed was founded by Egyptians (including the current director and head imam Mahmoud Shershaby) and the ISOOK by a Syrian (Ahmed Salam).

The four mosques draw large numbers of attendees. The Friday prayers in particular attract hundreds of practitioners. The mosques are attended by both men and women and are especially popular with young people.

2.4.3 Activities

The salafist centres are more than just prayer houses. They organise teaching activities (such as Koran and language lessons) and readings about Islam in the mosques. They also organise repeat annual multi-day conferences (dawras) which attract hundreds of visitors, both domestically and from abroad. Speakers are also invited to these dawras from other countries. The mosques additionally house retail areas where all sorts of products are on offer (such as books and audiocassettes).

Three of the four mosques run their own website. The websites are also used to make the mosque's opinions publicly known. The web address of the El-Tawheed Foundation is www.eltawheed.nl. This foundation also publishes the periodical *Maandblad El-Tawheed* (El-Tawheed Monthly). The As-Sunnah maintains the website: www.al-yaqeen.com. The ISOOK maintains the websites www.al-basair.com/www.isook.nl (which are not online at the moment). Al Waqf does not have any website geared specifically

⁵⁴ De Volkskrant, *Salafisme: compromissloos en rechtlijnig, maar 'niet gevaarlijk'* [Salafism: uncompromising and rigidly straightforward, but 'not dangerous'], 5 July, 2005.

towards the Netherlands.

2.4.4 *Orientation within salafism*

In Chapter Two we saw that modern salafism is composed of three significant factions: an apolitical faction, a political faction and a jihadist faction. To which factions can we attribute the four most important salafist centres in the Netherlands? It's not easy to answer this question. In practice, the boundary between the different factions cannot always be clearly defined. The three factions may all attend a single mosque. There are also mainstream practitioners who attend the mosques more out of practical reasons, because the mosque is nearby, for instance. Despite the heterogeneity of the population attending the mosques, we will attempt in the following sections to define the orientation of these mosques in greater detail by examining the backgrounds of their most important imams and/or the administrative organisations connected with these mosques.

Apolitical orientation

The leadership of Al Waqf in Eindhoven and the Al-Fourkaan mosque officially appeal to the religious leaders connected to the Saudi government. This means that Al Waqf is best classed under the apolitical faction. Also the fact that Al Waqf does not belong to the politically oriented Foundation for the Islamic Committee for Al-Sunnah in the Netherlands (*Stichting Islamitisch Comité voor Ahl-Soennah in Nederland*) (see Section 2.4.5 below), may be an indication that the foundation has an apolitical orientation. The foregoing, however, does not change the fact that the mosques maintain connections with preachers who are critical of the Saudi royal family. In the past there was even talk of the mosque being a *breeding ground* for recruitment to violent jihad (see also Section 3.5.1).⁵⁵ Thus no definitive conclusion can be offered regarding the orientation of Al Waqf.

Political orientation

The political orientation is the dominant variant within salafism in the Netherlands. The most important imams of the ISOOK, the El-Tawheed and the As-Sunnah represent the political faction within salafism. Fawaz Jneid, Ahmed Salam and Mahmoud Shershaby were involved in the Muslim Brotherhood in their country of origin.⁵⁶ They fled their

55 www.rechtspraak.nl, LJ Numbers AZ1373 and AZ1371.

56 Siem Eikelenboom, *Jihad in de polder. De radicale islam in Nederland* [Jihad in the polder. Radical Islam in the Netherlands], 2004.

country to escape persecution their resulting from their political activities. Jneid came to the Netherlands in 1992, where he quickly came in contact with the As-Sunnah mosque. Salam came to the Netherlands in 1989, where he was engaged as the imam of the Al-Fourkaan in Eindhoven. He founded the ISOOK in 2000.

For the politically oriented imams, Islam is holistic. Fawaz Jneid speaks about this in the *Volkskrant* in 2005: “Islam is complete, encompasses all things, it deals with politics, economics, with social issues.” This is how it was at the time of the prophet. Pure Islam is the only faith that has an answer to all problems.”⁵⁷

Jihadist orientation

There are no mosques in the Netherlands which represent the jihadist variant of salafism. The mosques discussed in this chapter publicly distance themselves from the jihadists (see also Section 3.5).

2.4.5 Mutual cooperation

The politically oriented salafist imams Shershaby, Salam and Jneid belong to the Foundation for the Islamic Committee for Ahl-Sunnah in the Netherlands (*Stichting Islamitisch Comité voor Ahl-Soennah in Nederland*), founded on 26 March, 2001. Salam is the chairman. In the Netherlands, the committee is oriented primarily towards the dissemination of salafism, for which it organises the well-known dawra sessions in the mosques. The above-mentioned imams have strong ties with Saudi Arabia both on the ideological and the institutional level.⁵⁸

The Dutch committee in turn is part of the Committee for Ahl-Sunnah in Europe, which has members in various countries throughout western Europe. Salafist imams in the Netherlands are invited to conferences and meetings in these countries and sometimes give lectures there. These politically oriented salafist networks in Europe are said to be led by a Syrian, Adnan Ibn Muhammed Al-Arou, who resides in Saudi Arabia.

57 De Volkskrant, *Salafisme: compromisloos en rechtlijnig, maar ‘niet gevaarlijk’* [see footnote 54 above], 5 July, 2005.

58 See also: General Intelligence and Security Service, *Radicale dawa in verandering. De opkomst van islamitisch neoradicalisme in Nederland* [Radical dawa on the move. The rise of islamtistic neo-radicalism in the Netherlands], 2007.

What is noticeable about the infrastructure of politically oriented salafism in the Netherlands is its link with Syria. Two of the prominent imams (Jneid and Salam) have a Syrian background. The same is true of Al-Arouf, mentioned above.

2.4.6 Emphasis on da'wa

The four centres emphasise da'wa; their goal is the re-islamization of Muslims. The (a) political centres derive this emphasis on da'wa from the so-called Mecca period of the prophet Mohammed. During this period – in which Muslims constituted a minority – the prophet abstained from the use of violence in spreading Islam in order to avoid repression. The prophet and his followers concentrated on da'wa. That the (a)political salafists abstain from violence should not be construed as a fundamental rejection of violence.

3. The emergence of Saudi-inspired salafism in the Netherlands: a reconstruction

This chapter will provide an historical reconstruction of the emergence of salafism in the Netherlands. The division into different periods is not absolute. At most, this is an outline, intended to shed some light on the developments in question.

3.1 Quietly working on building an infrastructure (1986-2001)

As Chapter Two indicates, the first salafist centre was founded in 1986. The other centres appeared in the years thereafter. In retrospect, we can determine that the salafist movement (and thus radical Islam as well) was able to work, unobserved, on building an infrastructure in the Netherlands. In the much-consulted book by Nico Landman from 1992 entitled *Van mat tot minaret. De institutionalisering van de islam in Nederland* (From Mat to Minaret, the Institutionalisation of Islam in the Netherlands) the word 'salafism' does not appear a single time. Neither does the book discuss any of the imams or mosques which are the subject of this report.⁵⁹

In October of 1996, four years after the appearance of Landman's book, an article entitled *De imams creëren hun eigen Marokkaanse Staphorst* (The imams are creating their own Moroccan Staphorst) appeared in *Vrij Nederland*. This article can be regarded as one of the first articles to address the issue of radical Islam in the Netherlands. Various topics which were discussed in the article, such as the clash between freedom of religion and the constitutional right to equal treatment, are still current today. This article again does not name any mosques or imams that would later be decisive for salafism in the Netherlands.

In 1998 the first report appeared in which a foundation was mentioned that played a crucial role in the spread of salafism in the Netherlands. This report, entitled *De politieke Islam in Nederland* (Political Islam in the Netherlands), by the National Security Service (BVD: *Binnenlandse Veiligheidsdienst*), the predecessor of the General Intelligence and Security Service, states that the Al Waqf Foundation provides financial

59 Landman did touch on a new school of thought among Moroccan (particularly younger) Muslims which he called 'integration-oriented Islamism'. The author did not rule out a growth in this school of thought to the extent that these Islamists produce the flexibility to formulate new goals and strategies for the Dutch context. Landman did not see any future in the Netherlands for the more radical forms of expression of Islamist ideologies among Moroccans.

support to Islamic primary schools.⁶⁰ The National Security Service report entitled *De democratische rechtsorde en islamitisch onderwijs* (The democratic legal order and Islamic education) from early 2002 again examines this financial support. This document also reports that Saudi-inspired salafism⁶¹ in the Netherlands finds little resonance among Dutch Muslims. According to the report, at that point in time the foundation's influence had actually declined since the mid-1990s.

3.2 Salafist mosques under observation (2002)

In the period from 1986 to 2001 salafist mosques were able to work, quietly and without disturbance, on building up their infrastructure within the Netherlands in absolute anonymity. This anonymity came to an abrupt end in 2002. In that year, developments arose which drew public attention to the salafist mosques. This section will provide a description, in outline form, of these developments.

3.2.1 *The Kashmir Affair*

The year 2002 began with the dramatic death of two young Moroccan Dutchmen in the Indian territory of Kashmir. In the early morning of Sunday, 13 January 2002 Khalid el Hasnoui and Ahmed el Bakiouli, both of whom were raised in the Netherlands, were killed at a border station in Srinagar. Up to the present day the circumstances of the boys' death are still not clear, neither is it clear why the boys had travelled to India. What we do know, however, is that the two were recruited in the Netherlands for violent jihad.⁶² The death of these boys thrust the Al-Fourkaan mosque into the limelight. It turned out that the boys not only attended the mosque on a regular basis, but were also in contact with recruiters who were active in the mosque.⁶³ From that time on, the mosque would become known as a centre which played a role in the radicalisation of (in particular) young Muslims in the Netherlands.

60 General Intelligence and Security Service, *De politieke islam in Nederland* [Political Islam in the Netherlands], 1998.

61 The report speaks of 'Wahhabism' and the 'pure religion'; it does not use the term 'salafism', as this was not in use at the time.

62 National Security Service, *Jaarverslag Binnenlandse Veiligheidsdienst 2001* [Annual Report of the National Security Service 2001], 2002.

63 Siem Eikelenboom, *Jihad in de polder. De radicale islam in Nederland*, 2004 [see footnote 56 above]. See also: General Intelligence and Security Service, *Saoedische invloeden in Nederland. Verbanden tussen salafistische missie, radicaliseringsprocessen en islamistisch terrorisme*, June 2004.

3.2.2 *Islamic education*

On 21 December 2001 and 18 February 2002 the television programme NOVA examined the Al Waqf Foundation's influence on several Islamic primary schools.⁶⁴ NOVA focussed on a religious textbook which Al Waqf distributed to several Islamic primary schools. This textbook, which takes the salafist doctrine as its basis, contains passages which must be classified as extremely anti-integration and anti-democratic. The television programme further revealed that the foundation was providing financial support to several Islamic primary schools and also had influence on staffing of the schools.

On 20 February 2002, two days after the NOVA broadcast, the National Security Service published the above-mentioned report, *The democratic legal order and Islamic education*.⁶⁵ This report largely confirms NOVA's findings. According to the National Security Service's investigation, Al Waqf gives financial support to various Islamic primary schools. At the same time, the service notes that in practice the foundation's influence on the schools is in fact limited, because the Dutch government finances salaries and provisions for these schools.

3.2.3 *Jihadists attend the Al-Fourkaan mosque*

In April and August 2002 thirteen people were arrested on suspicion of involvement in the preparation of terrorist activities. A number of these suspects were regular attendees of the Al-Fourkaan mosque. We know that they engaged in recruiting activities in and around the mosque.

3.2.4 *NOVA sermons*

Four months after the broadcasts about the influence of Al Waqf on several Islamic primary schools, two NOVA broadcasts once again led to great civil and political unrest. On 13 and 14 June the television programme reported on sermons which were given in the As-Sunnah mosque in The Hague and the El-Tawheed in Amsterdam.⁶⁶ What is

64 NOVA allowed Siem Eikelenboom to engage in almost fulltime research into Muslim extremists in the Netherlands in 2002 and 2003. This research led not only to groundbreaking reports by NOVA but also to the first book about radical Islam in the Netherlands (*Jihad in de polder. De radicale islam in Nederland* [see footnote 56 above]) in 2004.

65 National Security Service, *De democratische rechtsorde en islamitisch onderwijs* [The democratic legal system and islamic education], 2002.

66 See also: Siem Eikelenboom, *Jihad in de polder. De radicale islam in Nederland*, [see footnote 56 above], 2004.

noticeable about these sermons – which were secretly recorded – is that they do not distinguish between religion, morality and politics. The sermons make it clear that political Islam has now reached Dutch mosques as well. The salafist message that was communicated in the mosques clashes with the democratic legal order, among other things. The sermons are extremely anti-integration, call for intolerance and isolationism and even rejection of laws that have been established in a democratic manner. They also demonstrate an extremely anti-western ideology and evoke the image of an Islam that is threatened by 'enemies of Islam'. According to the imams, a return to 'pure Islam' is the solution to these problems. After the broadcasts, the salafist mosques would henceforth come to be known as breeding grounds par excellence for radicalisation and extremism.

3.2.5 *Government applies pressure*

The sermons led to much commotion and a broad social debate about how to assess these statements. Political and government officials also took action. The ministers responsible at the time, Van Boxtel (Minister for Urban Policy and Integration of Ethnic Minorities and Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations) and Korthals (Minister of Justice) of the outgoing Cabinet submitted a letter to the Lower House of Parliament on 2 July 2002 stating that the imams' statements would be tested against criminal law and that, if necessary, measures under immigration law would be taken.⁶⁷ The letter also states that mayors and aldermen had already had talks with the mosque administrators and/or imams involved, in which a clear signal was given about what is considered acceptable in Dutch society. According to the letter, the imams and mosque administrators were responsive to the arguments made by the municipalities. Only Fawaz Jneid persisted in his (radical) views. What is striking about this letter is that the sermons given by these salafist imams were still viewed as 'isolated cases'.

On 10 December 2002 the Public Prosecution Service announced that it would not resort to criminal prosecution of the imams.⁶⁸ The officers of justice who were involved concluded on the basis of applicable case law that the chance of a successful prosecution was particularly slim. According to the Public Prosecution Service, the statements made by the imams were reprehensible, but not punishable. The imams were not directly calling for the use of violence in the Netherlands or elsewhere. Neither

67 Lower House of Parliament, 2001-2002 session, 28 006, nr. 11.

68 Public Prosecution Service, *Persbericht Geen strafvolgving tegen imams* [press release: No criminal prosecution of imams], 10 December, 2002.

were the statements specific enough to be classified as provocation or incitement.

This decision brought an end to a turbulent year in which salafist mosques had suddenly found themselves under the full attention of politics, society and, last but not least, the media. As we will see in the following sections, the Public Prosecution Service's decision did by no means signify an end to the discussion about the place of (radical) Islam in Dutch society.

3.3 Salafist mosques under further pressure (2003 and 2004)

The social debate about radical imams and mosques continued unabated throughout 2003 and 2004. The discussion focused on the financing of radical imams and mosques via Saudi Arabia and the legal possibilities for closing radical mosques and deporting radical imams. The social and political pressure on the mosques reached a peak when Theo van Gogh was murdered on 2 November 2004.

3.3.1 Saudi financing under discussion

Financing from Saudi Arabia came to light as early as February 2002 in the National Security Service's report about Islamic education. Following this report, various questions were posed regarding the nature of this financing. What is the scope of the financing? Who is providing the funds? Is the financing an attempt to gain influence? And, of course, the question of whether the flow of money from Saudi Arabia will lead to radicalism and possibly even terrorism in the Netherlands?

On 31 December 2002 the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations responded to a question submitted to Parliament by MP G. Wilders about financing from Saudi Arabia by affirming that salafist mosques in the Netherlands did indeed receive money from this country.⁶⁹ The ministers confirmed the financial links between the Al Waqf Foundation in Eindhoven and its headquarters in Saudi Arabia as well as that between the El-Tawheed Foundation in Amsterdam and Al Haramain in Saudi Arabia.

On 5 February 2004 a debate took place in the Lower House of Parliament regarding the financing of Dutch imams and mosques via Saudi Arabia. During this debate, the Lower House passed a motion – submitted by MP Wilders for the VVD party (People's Party

⁶⁹ Lower House of Parliament 2002-2003 session, nr. 520.

for Freedom and Democracy) – which requested the government to speed up a General Intelligence and Security Service investigation into Saudi influences in the Netherlands. This report was published on 9 June 2004.⁷⁰ The report named foundations – already indicated in Chapter Two of the present report – which had received (financial) support from Saudi Arabia. According to the Service, the mosques in question had been disseminating radical (extremely anti-integration) messages for years. Though the mosques did not publicly call for jihad, the sermons did have a jihadist tone. The report subsequently states that the Saudi ambassador in The Hague has indicated that five imams active in the Netherlands receive subsidies from Saudi Arabia via the Saudi embassy. In the memorandum, the names of the imams were not given.

3.3.2 Discussion on closing mosques and deporting imams

On 18 June 2002, a few days after the NOVA broadcasts about the imams' sermons, questions were asked during question time in the Lower House of Parliament about a possible temporary closure of the mosques. The call for closing the mosques would become only louder in 2003 and 2004. From the beginning, however, the various Cabinets responded to such calls with great reservation. In response to the questions during the above-mentioned Question Hour, the ministers responsible at the time, Van Boxtel and Korthals of the outgoing Cabinet, replied in the letter of 2 July 2002, mentioned previously:

“The sole fact that shocking or hurtful statements are being made in a building intended for religious practice does not in any case justify resorting to closure of that building.”⁷¹

The Balkenende Cabinet, which entered office on 22 July 2002, and the subsequent Cabinets would maintain this position.⁷² The freedom of religion and belief, as laid down in article 6 of the Constitution, makes closure of mosques a very difficult and touchy affair.

70 General Intelligence and Security Service, *Saoedische invloeden in Nederland. Verbanden tussen salafistische missie, radicaliseringsprocessen en islamistisch terrorisme*, [see footnote 46 above], June 2004.

71 Lower House of Parliament 2001-2002 session, 28 006, nr. 11.

72 See: Lower House of Parliament 2002-2003 session, 27925, nr. 91. Lower House of Parliament 2002-2003 session, nr. 1269.

3.3.3 *Do Al Waqf seminars lead to terrorism?*

In 2003 and 2004, Al Waqf again appeared, repeatedly, in a negative light in the news. In particular, an article in the Wall Street Journal of 15 April 2003 caused considerable commotion. This article states that various members of Islamic networks had participated in seminars which Al Waqf had organised in the past. In a letter dated 25 April 2003 from the Cabinet to the Lower House of Parliament it is stated that this cannot be ruled out.⁷³ The Cabinet, however, does not agree with the assumption – expressed in the NOVA broadcast of 23 April 2003 – that participation in the Al Waqf seminars “leads, with a certain inevitability, directly to involvement in violent jihad or terrorism.”⁷⁴ According to the Cabinet, this causal link is not justified. In June 2003 and August 2004 MP J. Eerdmans (LPF: Pim Fortuyn List) again put forward questions regarding the same issue, and the Cabinet once again replied that there was no evidence that the seminars in question were direct training for violent jihad.⁷⁵

3.3.4 *Jihadist murders Theo van Gogh*

In the early morning of 2 November 2004 the opinion maker and filmmaker Theo van Gogh was murdered by Mohammed Bouyeri, a proponent of violent jihad. This meant that the first act of violence committed in the Netherlands in the name of Islam had become a fact. A shock went through the whole country. Ethnic tensions within society had never been so apparent in the post-war Netherlands as they were in the weeks after this murder. For four weeks the country was the scene of interethnic incidents.

When on 10 November 2004 the police stormed a house in the Laakkwartier district of The Hague in which two prominent leaders of the Hofstad Network (Jason W. and Ismail A.) had barricaded themselves, a hand grenade was thrown at the arrest team; three agents were wounded. An hours-long siege of the house ensued. Pictures of this siege travelled all over the world and confirmed the image of a country in crisis.

When it became known that Bouyeri was an attendee of the El-Tawheed mosque in Amsterdam and that he evidently had become radicalised in this mosque, the social and political pressure on salafist mosques reached a climax. From within the Lower House of Parliament, there was an increase in the political pressure to close the El-Tawheed –

73 Lower House of Parliament 2002-2003 session, 27925, nr. 91.

74 Lower House of Parliament 2002-2003 session, 27925, nr. 91.

75 Lower House of Parliament 2002-2003 session, nr. 1461. Lower House of Parliament 2004-2005 session, nr. 78.

as well as other salafist mosques – and to deport radical imams. The Public Prosecution Service announced it would investigate whether civil law offered possibilities to dissolve foundations that could be linked to terrorist activities.

3.4 Expansion of salafist influence despite pressure (from 2005 onwards)

3.4.1 *Salafism expands*

The social and political pressure on the salafist centres did not lead to a containment of the salafist ideology in the Netherlands. On the contrary, from early 2005 onwards the ideological influence of the salafist centres greatly increased.⁷⁶ Lectures on diverse aspects of the salafist doctrine (dogma, ethics and law) are organised via the four centres in at least thirty major Moroccan mosques and/or youth centres with varying frequency.⁷⁷ The number of locations, lectures and active preachers at least doubled between 2005 and the first half of 2007. A new generation of itinerant (youth) preachers played a major role in the dissemination of salafist da'wa (see 3.4.2). Attempts at salafist influence seem successful particularly in mosques run by weak administrations (often run by the first generation of immigrants).⁷⁸ There are also signals that the salafist message is finding increasing receptivity among Turks as well.⁷⁹

In addition to this ideological influence, salafist forces are also attempting literal takeovers of moderate (primarily Moroccan) mosques.⁸⁰ Salafists do not shy away from sowing discord within mosques. Cases have even been known in which non-salafist imams have been driven out of mosques, after which salafist imams have taken over their positions.

These developments in the Netherlands show great similarity to those in France. According to well-known Islamic scholar Samir Amghar (2005), the salafists in France employ a *parasitage* strategy to effect dissemination of their doctrine.⁸¹ *Parasitage* means

76 National Coordinator for Counterterrorism, *Vierde voortgangsrapportage terrorismebestrijding* [Fourth Progress Report on Counterterrorism], June 2006.

77 General Intelligence and Security Service, *Radicale dawa in verandering. De opkomst van islamitisch neoradicalisme in Nederland* [see footnote 58 above], 2007.

78 National Coordinator for Counterterrorism, *Vierde voortgangsrapportage terrorismebestrijding*, [see footnote 76 above], June 2006.

79 See also: Lower House of Parliament 2006-2007 session, 29 754, nr. 87.

80 National Coordinator for Counterterrorism, *Vierde voortgangsrapportage terrorismebestrijding*, [see footnote 76 above], June 2006. General Intelligence and Security Service, *Jaarverslag* [Annual Report] 2006, 2007.

81 Samir Amghar, *Ideologies minoritaires de l'islam de France: salafistes et ahabshs*, [Minority ideologies of Islam in France : salafists and ahabshs], 2005.

that a group of salafists decide to visit a mosque or Islamic cultural centre. Then, when this group feels it is strong enough, the group members attempt to seize power by ousting and replacing the administration and the imam. In France, various mosques have already fallen into the hands of salafists using this strategy.

3.4.2 *A new generation of youth preachers comes into view*

It was revealed earlier that a new generation of youth preachers plays a significant role in disseminating salafist da'wa. A number of differences can be distinguished between the first and second generation of preachers.⁸² Whereas the first generation of preachers came to the Netherlands from the Middle East at a later age, second-generation preachers are of primarily Moroccan background and were born or at least raised in the Netherlands. This means they have the same background as their most important target group: Muslim youths of Moroccan descent. The second generation of preachers, in contrast to the first generation, also has the same sociocultural background as Muslim youth in the Netherlands. It is precisely because of these similarities that second-generation preachers find acceptance within Muslim youths' frame of experience (see also 6.1.1).

3.4.3 *Initiatives to institutionalise salafist da'wa*

Besides the range of lectures on offer, there is also an apparent increase in the institutionalisation of Islamic theological education on the part of the salafists. Particularly striking are the activities of the Tilburg preacher Suhayb Salam, one of the most popular itinerant salafist youth preachers in the Netherlands. He is the initiator of the salafist-oriented Institute for Teaching and Education (IOE: *Instituut voor Opvoeding en Educatie*), which was established in late October 2006 in Utrecht (see also Section 2.3). The goal of this institute is not just to educate students in 'right' knowledge, but also to train them to be able to implement the *call* (da'wa) to Islam in the correct manner.⁸³ The IOE cooperates closely with the ISOOK and the As-Sunnah mosque. Following completion of the foundation programme in Islamology, the student can then choose to study the one-year programme 'Practical education'. During this year, the student can become qualified to give Islamic lectures. This means that the IOE is on its way to becoming the *first* institute in the Netherlands to train salafist preachers. From these initiatives on the part of the salafists to train preachers, we can suppose that the

⁸² General Intelligence and Security Service, *Radicale dawa in verandering. De opkomst van islamitisch neoradicalisme in Nederland*, [see footnote 58 above], 2007.

⁸³ www.ivo.nl.

number of salafist preachers will increase over time (there are already at least twenty salafist youth preachers active in the Netherlands⁸⁴).

3.4.4 *Professionalisation of salafist da'wa*

Concealed behind the spread of the salafist creed is a greatly increased professionalisation of da'wa. The salafists have the desire, the means and the capacity to carry out their strong drive to disseminate their beliefs. It is noticeable in this regard that the centres as well are attempting more and more to combine their efforts. A good example of this is the so-called 'lecture line', which was started in 2006 on the initiative of several young salafist preachers. This lecture line is a way for members of the faith to come in contact with salafist preachers and request a lecture. The lectures attract attention from a wide cross-section of the public. For example, on 17 October 2006 Suhayb Salam gave a lecture at the Eindhoven Technical University to an audience of over 40 people.⁸⁵ It is precisely this increase in the level of organisation that enables the centres to meet the high demand for knowledge about (radical) Islam.

What is remarkable here is that salafists do not conceal their ambitions about spreading da'wa in the Netherlands. The 'salafist agenda' is freely available for view on the Internet. Not only does this agenda give the place where a lecture will be given, it frequently indicates the exact location where the lecture will be given, the subject of the lecture and its target group as well as the name of the preacher. These lectures are given by both men and women, though there is strict segregation of the sexes during lectures. Lectures are also given to which exclusively men ('brothers') or women ('sisters') are invited.

3.4.5 *Language as a strategy tool*

Salafists chiefly target young people, second- and third-generation Moroccan youths in particular. It is evident that they are making increased use of 'language' as a tool to interest young people in their message.⁸⁶ Though salafists are not much in favour of integration, they were the first to offer lectures in Dutch. This is in contrast to many of the more *mainstream* mosques. By giving lectures in Dutch, salafists have played upon a

84 see also: www.al-yaqeen.nl.

85 www.tue.nl. Brabants Dagblad, *Studenten gescheiden voor moslimlezing* [Students seated separately for Muslim lecture], 16 November, 2006.

86 National Coordinator for Counterterrorism, *Vierde voortgangsrapportage terrorismebestrijding* [see footnote 76 above], June 2006.

growing need for knowledge about Islam among Muslim youths, many of whom do not know Arabic. By using the Dutch language, salafists have expressly opened the doors to their mosques for these youths.

In addition to the use of the Dutch language, there are increasing signs that this *language strategy* is also being applied to other target groups.⁸⁷ The As-Sunnah mosque in The Hague, for instance, is increasingly orienting itself towards its Turkish attendees. Islamic lessons in the mosque are now also being given in Turkish, in the hope that the salafist message will find reception among Turkish Muslims. Salafists are now also organising lectures in Berber – the language spoken by most Moroccan Dutch.

3.5 External pressure leads to moderation (from 2005 onwards)

3.5.1 Government takes action

Despite the social and political pressure, the government did not close any mosques, though that doesn't mean that the government didn't take action in other areas to counteract the excesses of salafism (such as preaching hatred and intolerance).

Initiatives were taken both on the local and the national level: mayors had firm talks with imams and/or administrations; sermons were tested against criminal law; the Public Prosecution Service attempted to dissolve organisations via the courts.

Most striking of all are the procedures under alien law initiated by the former Minister for Immigration and Integration, R. Verdonk, aimed at the deportation of radical imams. For example, on 21 February 2005 the ministers designated three imams of the Al-Fourkaan mosque as national security risks on the basis of official reports by the General Intelligence and Security Service; a pronouncement of undesirability was issued against them. According to the General Intelligence and Security Service, these imams did not offer sufficient resistance to recruiting practices in the mosque. Meanwhile, the Council of State ruled in late April 2007 that the pronouncement of undesirability against one of the three imams was legitimate due to his danger to national security.⁸⁸ The pronouncement of undesirability against him, which remains in effect for ten years, became irrevocable with the Council of State's decision. Furthermore, the Zwolle court ruled in early October 2007 that pronouncement of undesirability against a second

87 National Coordinator for Counterterrorism, *Samenvatting Dreigingsbeeld Terrorisme Nederland 8* [Summary of the current threat level for Terrorism in the Netherlands, No. 8], April 2007. www.al-yaqeen.com.

88 ANP, 27 April, 2007.

imam was also legitimate due to his danger to national security.⁸⁹ A third imam lodged no appeal and left the Netherlands voluntarily.

3.5.2 *Salafist mosques take a more moderate stance*

As early as June 2004 the General Intelligence and Security Service observed that the salafist mosques, under constant external pressure, were publicly taking a more moderate stance, and that they appeared to be more willing to bar recruiters and to be more open to their (direct) environment.⁹⁰ This development gained momentum after the murder of Van Gogh in November 2004. The salafist mosques feel obliged to publicly distance themselves from jihadists in the Netherlands who wish to resort to violence.⁹¹ They also increasingly acknowledge the problem of radicalisation and recruiting in their own circle. Jneid even advised radical Muslims associated with the Hofstad Network to cooperate with investigators.⁹²

3.5.3 *Jihadists shift their field of activities*

Precisely because of this moderation and the constant attention being paid the mosques, jihadists seem to feel less at ease in the salafist centres. This development – which was apparent even before Van Gogh's murder⁹³ – resulted in a situation whereby jihadists started meeting more and more outside of the mosques.⁹⁴ Thus the process of radicalisation seems to be shifting to meetings in living rooms. This development makes it more difficult for police and security services to identify and monitor radicalisation processes in a timely manner.

89 ANP, *Ook tweede Eindhovense imam terecht uitgezet* [Deportation of second imam declared legal], 10 October, 2007.

90 General Intelligence and Security Service, *Saoedische invloeden in Nederland. Verbanden tussen salafistische missie, radicaliseringsprocessen en islamistisch terrorisme* [see footnote 46 above], June 2004.

91 Lower House of Parliament, 2005-2006 session, 29 754, nr. 66.

92 NRC Handelsblad, *Laveren tussen de wet en Allah* [Compromising between Allah and the law], September 2005.

93 General Intelligence and Security Service, *Saoedische invloeden in Nederland. Verbanden tussen salafistische missie, radicaliseringsprocessen en islamistisch terrorisme* [see footnote 46 above], June 2004.

94 National Coordinator for Counterterrorism, *Samenvatting Dreigingsbeeld Terrorisme Nederland 8* [see footnote 87 above], April 2007. General Intelligence and Security Service, *Jaarverslag* [Annual report] 2006, 2007.

3.6 Image of salafist centres becomes more diffuse (2006-present)

The image of salafist mosques has been growing more diffuse, especially since 2006. Various images have emerged which seem to be competing with each other. This and other developments will be elucidated in the following sections.

3.6.1 *The emergence of divergent images*

Increasingly divergent images have emerged of salafism in the Netherlands, particularly during 2006.⁹⁵ The image which has already been accepted for some time now is that of mosques conveying an ideology which could affect the democratic legal order over the long term. This is an image which is depicted primarily by the national government. Over time this image has become more diffuse. A significant factor for this development is the fact that the number of information sources has increased. The image of salafism in the Netherlands has for a long time been strongly influenced by the General Intelligence and Security Service. It was this Service which first cast light on what for the Netherlands is a new phenomenon. The Service, however, perceives salafism primarily from a security point of view. Starting in 2004, and especially in 2006, publications were released by journalists and investigative offices which sometimes cast a different light on the manifestation of salafism in the Netherlands. What is noticeable here is that the mosques' direct environment does not (always) actually perceive the radicalisation tendencies. On the local level the dialogue in fact appears to have been intensified.⁹⁶ The scientific community as well has become more interested in salafism.

Another significant factor in the emergence of divergent images is the fact that the centres themselves are increasingly seeking publicity to give their side of the story. They are attempting to influence public debate – and thus their perceived image as well – through press reports, television and the Internet.⁹⁷ The mosques are stating that not only do they have nothing to do with radicalism, they even form a buffer against

95 See also: National Coordinator for Counterterrorism, *Zesde voortgangsrapportage terrorismebestrijding* [Sixth Progress Report on Counterterrorism], June 2007.

96 An example of just such a dialogue is the *Masterclass voor wethouders en ambtenaren* ('Masterclass for aldermen and public officials') on salafism which took place on 20 April, 2007 and was organised by FORUM (the Institute for Multicultural Development). A component of this Masterclass was a visit to the As-Sunnah mosque in The Hague.

97 An example of this is the television appearance by Ahmed Salam (March 2007) on Pauw en Witteman. The occasion for this appearance were reports in the media about a critical conversation which the mayor of Tilburg had with Salam on 4 December, 2006. During this discussion, the mayor told the imam that he was expressing conceptions which were in conflict with the democratic legal order and the standards and values of Dutch society.

terrorism. With a new generation of young salafist preachers and administrators entering the picture, the expectation is that salafist forces will be increasingly capable of engaging with their environment. Indeed, the second generation is better informed of the rules by which the Dutch constitutional state governs itself than is the first generation of preachers.

3.6.2 *Salafists' confidence increases*

After Van Gogh's murder the salafist centres feared closure. It has since become evident that this fear has been replaced by a newfound confidence. The increased ideological influence will have contributed to this. It also appears that the centres have learned how to deal with the constant external pressure and have become more aware of their environment. As indicated above, we have seen that they are even actively trying to influence public debate.

3.6.3 *Signs of adaptation*

Although up to now salafist forces in the Netherlands have been unanimous in their rejection of integration into an 'unbelieving' Dutch society, there are also more and more signs indicating forms of participation in and interaction with this society. For instance, Fawaz Jneid of the As-Sunnah mosque in The Hague called for the community to exercise their voting rights in the 2006 parliamentary elections for the Lower House of Parliament. Ahmed Salam also has no objection to political participation by Muslims in the Netherlands. The precondition is that "this promotes the interests of Muslims" and "the party programme does not sow hatred".⁹⁸ Salam believes that Muslims' participation in politics will greatly improve their position. Jneid's and Salam's viewpoints are noteworthy because – as we saw in Chapter One – the salafist doctrine rejects the concept of democracy. It is possible that Jneid's and Salam's background in the Muslim Brotherhood plays a role here. The Muslim Brotherhood's position does not reject participation in elections.⁹⁹ In Egypt, for example, the (illegal) Muslim Brotherhood participates in elections via 'independent candidates'. Furthermore, it must be noted that the centres are making use of those instruments that are offered to

98 Abdelilah Ljamal, *Imams in tekst en context: Preken van moslims in Nederland* [see footnote 48 above], 2004.

99 The strategy of attempting to found an Islamic society through parliamentary channels is legitimised by referring back to the concept of shura, the early Islamic political practice of 'consultation' (see also Roel Meijer, *Geweld en de islamitische beweging* [Violence and the Islamic movement], in: *Vreemde Verwanten? Overeenkomsten en verschillen tussen islam en christendom*, Paul van Tongeren and Gerrit Steunebrink (ed.), 2003).

them by the constitutional state (such as contesting government decisions in court). This is surprising because according to the salafist doctrine, the members of this faith may only obey the laws of God and not laws which were made by Man.

3.6.4 *Centres remain a point of concern*

Despite the moderate stance which is publicly noticeable, and the signs of adaptation, salafist centres remain a point of concern from a security standpoint. After all, the foundations of salafism are at variance with the basic principles of the Dutch constitutional state. In its 2007 report, *Radicale dawa in verandering* (Radical dawa in change), the General Intelligence and Security Service paints a sombre picture of salafist da'wa in the Netherlands.¹⁰⁰ According to the Service, this salafist da'wa is currently capable of partially hindering the democratic legal order, especially for non-salafist Muslims or Muslims who otherwise do not comply with the salafists' strict rules governing lifestyle and behaviour. The report also states that the (public) attitude of moderation which is dealt with in the present report is nothing more than a political façade.

In a letter to the Lower House of Parliament dated 8 October 2007 the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, partly on behalf of the Minister of Justice and the Minister for Housing, Communities and Integration (WVI: *Wonen Wijken en Integratie*), outlined the approach she proposed to counteract the excesses of salafism.¹⁰¹ This is a three-pronged approach: 1) increasing resilience to radicalisation, 2) addressing salafists who make intolerant statements or exhibit intolerant conduct (by confronting and delegitimising these salafists), and 3) stepping in to enforce the law whenever it is violated.

¹⁰⁰ General Intelligence and Security Service, *Radicale dawa in verandering. De opkomst van islamitisch neoradicalisme in Nederland* [see footnote 58 above], 2007.

¹⁰¹ The letter (Lower House of Parliament, 2007-2008 session, 29 754, nr. 106) was sent to the Lower House simultaneously with the General Intelligence and Security Service report *De radicale dawa in verandering* [see footnote 58 above].

4. Emergence of violent jihad in the Netherlands

4.1 Introduction

Since the 1990s, an evolution has become evident within the jihadist faction of salafism in the Netherlands. On various occasions, government intervention was able to prevent a violent manifestation of this faction. The various arrests which have been made over the years come to mind in this regard.¹⁰² In addition, it may be assumed that the preventive effect of this broad approach has ensured that a manifestation of violent jihadism has been prevented.¹⁰³ This broad approach entails that counterterrorism is inseparably connected with early recognition of radicalisation processes, and prompt implementation of measures to counteract such radicalisation processes.

This chapter will reconstruct, in outline form, the emergence of the jihadist faction within salafism in the Netherlands.¹⁰⁴ We will first examine jihadists' use of the migration channel. Thereafter an analysis will be made of the manner in which jihadists began influencing Muslim communities in the Netherlands. Subsequently, the emergence of jihadist support networks and local jihadist networks will be put into perspective. The focus will then turn to the decentralisation of jihadism at a personal level. The chapter will conclude with an analysis of the most recent development: the divide between the intention and potential of local jihadist networks.

4.2 Jihadists use the migration channel (from the early 1990s on)

In the recent past, as generous asylum policies were pursued in many western European countries, it was relatively easy for jihadists to gain access to a western European country via asylum channels. A significant motive for requesting asylum in western Europe was escape from persecution in the asylum seeker's own country. Another group of jihadists had gathered war experience in international (Islamic) hotbeds of conflict such as Afghanistan and Bosnia where a perceived struggle against Muslims was taking place. Because they were in fear of persecution in their country of origin, some of these war veterans fled to western Europe after departing the conflict

¹⁰² Siem Eikelenboom, *Jihad in de polder. De radicale islam in Nederland* [see footnote 56 above], 2004. See also various General Intelligence and Security Service annual reports.

¹⁰³ Rob de Wijk and Carla Relk, *Doelwit Europa. Complotten en aanslagen van moslimextremisten* [Target Europe. Conspiracies and attacks of Muslim extremists], 2006.

¹⁰⁴ Here as well the division into different periods is not absolute. At most, this serves as an indication meant to provide a somewhat manageable overview of developments.

zones; they frequently continued their jihadist activities in western Europe.¹⁰⁵

Jihadists requested asylum in the Netherlands as well and, in some cases, were granted it. Other jihadists vanished into the anonymity of illegal residency after their asylum requests were denied. Yet others settled illegally in the Netherlands and never attempted to obtain a residence permit to begin with. In contrast to France, Great Britain and Spain, the jihadists who came to the Netherlands do not generally belong to prominent circles within the jihadist movement in their countries of origin. As a result, the Netherlands has scarcely attracted ideologists or religious leaders.

4.3 Jihadists influence Muslim communities (from 1997 on)

Around 1997, the jihadists who took refuge in the Netherlands sought, and found, affiliation with the long-established Muslim communities in this country. The similarities in language and cultural backgrounds of asylum seekers from Algeria, Egypt and Syria, and Moroccans in particular, offered room for influence within the margins of these minorities. The four centres discussed in Chapter Two accelerated this affiliation. Jihadists who were engaged in propagating and supporting international jihad in various hotbeds of conflict around the world sought affiliation with the four centres and were active as teachers, recruiters or fundraisers there. The centres were also the ideal meeting place for establishing contacts with the Muslim brothers. Via these institutions jihadists came into contact with a small but not insignificant number of young people from the second and third generations of immigrants who seemed to be susceptible to the radical doctrine.

4.4 Emergence of jihadist support networks (from 1999 on)

The first jihadist networks in the Netherlands manifested themselves around 1999. These networks were initially oriented towards supporting and facilitating international jihad. Some of the members of these support networks were apprehended in various arrest actions between 2001 and 2003. The Netherlands itself was originally neither a target nor a subject of interest for these networks. The first jihadist networks in the Netherlands were primarily oriented abroad and aimed at logistical and financial support for the jihadist struggle abroad.

¹⁰⁵ See also: General Intelligence and Security Service, *Rekrutering voor de jihad in Nederland: van incident naar trend* [Recruiting for the Jihad in the Netherlands: From Incident To Trend], 2002.

Ideology played an important role in the activities of jihadist networks recently established in the Netherlands. The first generation of jihadists were of various nationalities and ethnic backgrounds. A mutual cohesion was obtained through a politically mobilising interpretation of Islam and a radically anti-western position. This latter point was made possible in the mid-1990s by the first non-violent salafist structures in the Netherlands. It should also be stressed in this regard that the emergence of jihadism cannot be viewed as separate from the activities in the area of da'wa.¹⁰⁶ While da'wa and jihad can exist separately from one another, cases have also become known in which a symbiosis between da'wa and jihad was evident.

4.5 Emergence of local jihadist networks (from 2002 on)

Beginning in 2002, it became evident that local jihadist networks were becoming active in the Netherlands, with members who wished to carry out violent jihad in this country as well.¹⁰⁷ They organised their own training and education programmes outside the four centres, for instance in living rooms. They engaged their own 'teachers' and development of the first Dutch-language jihadist literature was initiated for this purpose. The use of the Internet within these circles further accelerated the processes of development and dissemination of the jihadist ideology in Dutch society. The following chapter will examine this phenomenon in greater detail.

The central role of local terrorist networks is an expression of a wider trend. Networks are an increasingly important form of organisation in modern societies, both on the national and international level. This is also true of terrorists and other criminals. Classical group formations with a typical leadership structure seem to have declined in significance. The Hofstad Network is the prototype of a local Dutch network. Its local history of development and local composition are characteristic for this type of network. The term 'local' does not mean there is no relation to world events or that the local context would dominate. International jihadist struggles or the perceived oppression of Muslims at home and abroad do draw the attention of local networks all the same: whether as an incentive to radicalise or a *cause célèbre* which draws one or two individuals from a local network to engage in the struggle. As regards the intensification and direction of radicalisation processes within local networks, the involvement of a

¹⁰⁶ See also: General Intelligence and Security Service, *Van Da'wa tot Jihad* [see footnote 16 above], 2004.

¹⁰⁷ See also: General Intelligence and Security Service, *De geweldadige jihad in Nederland* [Violent Jihad in the Netherlands], 2006.

foreign religious leader, as is the case with the Hofstad Network, is often of decisive importance.

4.6 Decentralisation of jihadism to a personal level (from 2004 on)

On the global level we are largely dealing with various networks which, though they do draw inspiration from Al Qaeda's doctrine, interpret and implement this in their own way in a regional or national context. The ultimate consequence of Al Qaeda's decentralisation is expressed in two ways. Firstly, cases are seen in which radicalised individuals or members of small groups undergo a self-radicalisation process, which leads them – under the influence of jihadist ideology - to be prepared to carry out jihadist activities. The Netherlands was confronted with such a case of independent motivation for the first time in 2004.

Secondly, a kind of 'cut-and-paste Islam' (in the ideological sense) is evident. Proponents of radical Islam in the west are developing their own variant of radical Islam for themselves or for their small group, aided by the modern media. Patching together a home-made ideology out of the pre-existing range of jihadist ideologies primarily serves to legitimise the wilful behaviour of individual jihadists. It is worth noting that, though internalisation of the jihadist ideology does lead to an abstract willingness to martyr oneself, this does not necessarily mean that such a thing will actually occur. Given the rapid expansion of radicalisation processes among Muslims in western Europe, and certainly within the Netherlands as well, it may at the very least be considered remarkable that up to the present time hardly any (suicide) attacks have taken place. There are no conclusive explanations for this fact. However, it is clear that the psychological threshold for martyrdom is higher in a democratic and prosperous country than it is in an autocratic or ungoverned crisis zone.

4.7 Divide between the intention and the potential of local jihadist networks and increase (from late 2006 on)

From the end of 2006 on, the threat from local jihadist networks in the Netherlands declined,¹⁰⁸ due to a divide between the intention and the potential of identified jihadist individuals and networks in the Netherlands. This divide is primarily the result of governmental actions against jihadist networks as well as a lack of discipline and

¹⁰⁸ National Coordinator for Counterterrorism, *Samenvatting Dreigingsbeeld Terrorisme Nederland 8* [see footnote 87 above], April 2007.

leadership within the local networks themselves. Future developments within these networks (such as the emergence of a leadership figure) could, however, reverse this decrease in strength.

5. Jihadism on the Dutch Internet

As evident from Chapter Four, the use of the Internet within these circles further accelerated the processes of development and dissemination of the jihadist ideology in Dutch society. The present chapter will examine this phenomenon in greater detail. First of all, Section One will provide a timeline of the development of jihadism on the Internet. This will be followed by Section Two, in which virtual jihadism is examined in greater detail.¹⁰⁹

5.1 Emergence of virtual jihadism, a timeline

Generally speaking, the development of jihadist websites followed the development of the *physical* jihadist networks in the Netherlands (see Chapter Four). The first jihadist sites that the Netherlands was faced with were based or oriented abroad. The language employed was primarily Arabic.

Then a shift occurred during the course of 2001. Dutch jihadist sites arose which had a foreign orientation. The jihadist actors behind this category of sites operated from within the Netherlands, developed various Dutch-language Internet zones, oriented themselves towards the Dutch public and explicitly called upon Dutch youth to participate in the jihadist struggle abroad.

Yet later, around 2003, Dutch jihadist sites arose which were aimed at the jihadist struggle in the Netherlands. In this regard, jihadists made intensive use of the Internet facilities which were available at that time via MSN groups. As regards their contents, the various MSN groups and sites oriented themselves both towards the theoretical and dogmatic aspects of the jihadist struggle as well as towards its practical and operational aspects. The frequent use of jihadist MSN groups in 2004 may perhaps be explained by this facility's ease of application and the frequent use of MSN by young people.

In 2004, jihadists resorted to using the free .tk. domains and freewebs to launch their own websites. A .tk. domain is easy to register. They can also be used for free, though the web pages come with advertising. Private individuals, companies or organisations can also use freewebs for hosting, at no charge, including the domain name. There

¹⁰⁹ Chapter Five is largely based on the National Coordinator for Counterterrorism's Internet study, entitled *Jihadisten op het Internet* (Jihadists on the Internet) which appeared in January 2007.

is no obligation and no costs associated with this and the user is not subjected to advertising. It is relatively easy for anyone to launch a website using freewebs.

Weblogs and the use of Paltalk are yet other phenomena in the Dutch jihadist context. The first weblog with an explicitly jihadist orientation dates from the middle of 2005, but then vanished in December of that year. A number of publications and declarations by the 'Lions of Tawheed', which are related to the Hofstad Network, could be found on this weblog. Jihadist groups are also making increased use of Paltalk, a speech-enabled chat programme which is free of charge.

5.2 Dutch jihadist sites examined in greater detail

While the previous section gave a reconstruction of the emergence of virtual jihad in the Netherlands, this section will zoom in on individual aspects of virtual jihad to get a better picture of this phenomenon.

Jihadists' Internet behaviour in a broad context

Use of the Internet by Dutch jihadists must be viewed in the broader context of Internet use among young people. Through postings and participation in discussions, ('supposed') jihadists are also attempting to gain recognition and respect. In doing so, they may express themselves as being much more radical than they are in reality. Not everybody who expresses radical views poses a threat *per se*.

Polemic between salafists

The polemic between violent and non-violent jihadist sympathisers is primarily expressed via the Internet. Discussions are largely about the question of when the use of violence is justifiable. Non-violent salafists accuse jihadists of 'innovating' the religion. By this they mean that jihadists give Islamic primary sources and statements by prominent Islamic scholars a wrong (new) interpretation. As we saw in Chapter Two, this polemic is not unique for the Netherlands but is being broadly conducted throughout the Islamic world.

Virtual jihadists as information brokers

Up to now, Dutch jihadists have primarily oriented themselves towards arranging, translating, offering and disseminating information by jihadist clergy as well as by strategic and operational leaders, and referring to that material on English or Arabic sites. In this way they are functioning primarily as intermediaries between the authors

of the material (producers) and the end users, though they in turn may also be end users. In the transfer of information, they link up with the language, culture, mentality and frame of experience of Moroccan youth in particular. This ensures effective communication of the jihadist message; this message primarily serves propaganda purposes, though it is also partially aimed at training. One possible tendency in 'translation policy' is that jihadists are slowly but surely switching from translating quite theoretical documents to translating texts of a practical and operational character.

Sites facilitate interaction

Various jihadist sites offer the possibility of interaction between jihadists and a broad, diverse public of interested individuals, as well as among jihadists themselves. Contribution by visitors, participants and members is actively stimulated. In this way information can be tailored to and exchanged with interested individuals in a customised way. In addition, virtual networks of Muslims and non-Muslims (potential converts) who are interested in the jihadist struggle can be formed in this manner. Ultimately, this even offers the opportunity to recruit those who are truly interested in the jihadist struggle.

Convergence of the physical and virtual worlds

Naturally, the extensive jihadist production of Internet material is a cover for individuals, groups or networks (the Hofstad Network being one of the most significant). The Hofstad Network, for example, presented itself as a virtual organisation by offering foreign productions, provision of translations/subtitling, and – mostly through copying – the development of their own individual productions.

International translation network

In the course of 2005 a virtual international translation network of jihadist literature in Arabic, English and French was formed which made intensive use of the Internet – and Dutch virtual jihadists found a place within this network. On the one hand, Dutch sites offer hyperlinks to these translations. On the other hand, virtual Dutch jihadists themselves participate in translating jihadist literature into Dutch from Arabic, English and French. When taking these activities into account, it appears that these virtual Dutch jihadists derive inspiration for their production of ideas from others abroad who take the initiative to set up a translation programme. These 'others' seek out current information and know where to go to find information on Arabic-language jihadist websites.

Radical Muslim women dominate the Dutch translation network

Compared to other European countries such as Great Britain, France and Belgium, virtual Dutch jihadists set themselves apart by the active role which women play. These Muslim women initially functioned as participants in the network around the Hofstad Network. Secondly, the women contributed to the development of jihadist literature in Dutch. They carried out documentation research on English-language jihadist oriented sites, then translated this into the Dutch language. At present, women are responsible for the majority of jihadist literature translated into Dutch. Furthermore, these Muslim women play a prominent role in both the content-based development of MSN groups/sites as well as interaction with the public. Muslim women actively participate in discussions, ask question and post messages on more general Islamic websites, though certainly on salafist sites as well.

Frequently translated authors

It was previously indicated that Dutch jihadists orient themselves towards translating and disseminating information by jihadist clergy as well as strategic and operational leaders. What is noticeable here is the influence of Abu Hamza al-Masri, a resident of Great Britain. Though this author had but a marginal influence on the content-based development of jihadism, many text fragments written by him have been translated into Dutch. He is distinguished for being one of the first jihadist preachers to give sermons in a foreign language (English), which is why he is capable of appealing to second-generation Muslim youth from Great Britain – and the Netherlands. Other conspicuous authors from whom text fragments have been translated into Dutch are Yusuf al-Ayeeri (1973-2003) and Abdulaziz al-Muqrin (1972 or 1973 – 2004), the leaders of Al Qaeda in Saudi Arabia in 2001-2003 and 2003-2004, respectively. A possible explanation for the interest in these authors is that they were capable of describing and conveying individual operational aspects of the jihadist struggle in a simple way. An example of this is the book by Yusuf al-Ayeeri, entitled *39 Ways to Participate in Jihad (39 wegen om deel te nemen aan Jihad)*. This is a publication of a very operational character; it is very specific and has the character of an instruction manual for practising jihad.

Neutral websites and forums

Besides launching their own sites, it is noticeable that Dutch jihadists also target neutral websites and forums which are popular among their potential target group. Examples of this are postings on random websites where the public can respond to postings or news items. Additionally, virtual jihadists constantly participate in discussions. This way

of operating on neutral sites is a clever propaganda and recruitment method: with a limited danger of government intervention, the jihadist message reaches a much wider public and there is even the possibility of attracting new supporters. Even so, jihadist texts, including when they are posted on neutral websites and forums, do not reach a large audience.

Audiovisual media

The efforts to translate jihadist literature into Dutch were accompanied by the development of audiovisual media to support jihadist activities in the Netherlands. The first audiovisual production, '*ons terrorisme*' (our terrorism) was announced on an MSN group on 17 March 2004 and was afterwards immediately posted at various locations. This was a Dutch adaptation of one of the video shorts by Al Qaeda in Iraq. Several other productions followed.

Instrument of political influence and propaganda

For jihadists, the Internet is an important instrument for political influence and propaganda. Jihadists post political statements at various discussion forums on the Internet in which they announce their views on current events. This is done with the intention of mobilising Muslims against the Dutch government and Dutch society, these being 'unbelievers'. The published communiqués are expressly aimed at Muslims in Dutch society and are intended to influence public opinion in general. Recent examples in 2006 were a pamphlet against participating in city council elections on 4 March 2006, a declaration by the 'Lions of Tawhied' on the eve of the judge's ruling on the Hofstad Network, and a pamphlet in which Muslims in the Netherlands were called upon to boycott the Dutch courts.

Texts 'out of place'

The jihadist texts in translation on the Dutch-language Internet are usually written from within the House of Islam (*Dar al-Islam*). The contrast to the House of Unbelief or War (*Dar al-Harb*) is a popular topic, but in almost all cases this is implicitly presented from the first position. Thus from a European or Dutch perspective, the texts are primarily concerned with societies in Islamic countries. In that regard, the jihadist texts are thus 'out of place' in the European context.

An even thinner ideological/content-based development: for how long still?

There is still no autonomy in Dutch jihadists ideological know-how and production. The level of conceptualisation and abstraction, as well as the competency to apply knowledge and insight to the Dutch situation, have not yet been sufficiently developed. Almost all the texts in Dutch translation were already translated into English first and then from English into Dutch. A selection of the translated material on offer was already provided on the English-language sites. Even the texts which were translated from Arabic are the work of others and thus not a production of the Dutch jihadists. For the most part, this indicates that they do not have a good command of Arabic. The question is, how long it will take for Dutch jihadists to acquire more autonomy in their ideological know-how?

6. Salafism explained in greater detail

The previous chapters outlined the development of salafism in the Netherlands. In this chapter we will further examine individual facets of salafism in the Netherlands. Salafism's power of attraction, its form of manifestation, and its scope will be discussed, in that order. In this chapter the terms 'salafism' and 'salafists' refer to both the violent and non-violent variants of salafism.

6.1 Who is susceptible to the salafist ideology and why?

6.1.1 The 'why' question

It is beyond the scope of the present report to discuss in detail the question of *why* salafism has been able to make such inroads in the Netherlands and beyond. For a comprehensive discussion of this question – as it pertains to the Dutch situation – the reader is referred, among others, to the 2006 book *Strijders van eigen bodem. Radicale en democratische moslims in Nederland* (Home-grown Fighters, Radical and Democratic Muslims in the Netherlands), co-authored by Frank Buijs. In this chapter it should suffice to give a brief account of the most important insights in this area.

In order to answer the question of why people become susceptible to a radical doctrine (salafism in the case at hand), we will refer to Borum's observations (2004). On the basis of literary research, he argues that there are three central concepts which play a role in a radicalisation process: injustice, identity and social cohesion. These central concepts will be applied to salafism in the following sections.

Injustice

There is the feeling among large groups of Muslims in the Netherlands that Muslims are subject to worldwide injustice. For some Muslim youth, these feelings are fed, among other things, by reports and images of the way that Muslims in many countries are (supposedly) being oppressed and persecuted; the image that the West is waging a war against Islam not only in Iraq and Afghanistan but in general; the negative position held by some (Dutch) politicians, parts of the population and/or in the media regarding Islam; and personal or perceived experiences with discrimination in the work place. Salafists play upon feelings of injustice primarily by emphasising and affirming that Christians and Jews *consciously* attack Islam.

Identity

Identity centres on the question “who am I?”. Uncertainty about one’s own identity can best be reduced by, among other things, becoming part of to a group which has a strong ideological, ethnic, cultural or religious identity. For some people this search can lead to membership in a radical group which can offer them an alternative identity. This process constitutes an important explanation for the emergence of salafism in the Netherlands. Salafists not only affirm and promote the image of Muslims being subject to injustice, they also offer young people a new identity as alternative. The power of this new salafist identity is that it offers young people something to hold onto in a complex and modern western society in which these young people feel ostracised. A complicating factor in this regard is that some Muslim youths feel not only estranged by Dutch society but feel equally ill at ease in the culture and tradition which they were born into. Salafists’ answer to this is an unambiguous code (of conduct), a comprehensive system of behaviour and rules which gives young people guidelines by which they can shape their life in an ‘unbelieving’ society such as the Netherlands.

Social cohesion

Social cohesion clearly overlaps with the search for one’s own identity. Indeed, belonging to a group can contribute to the development of a person’s identity – and salafism offers this social cohesion. In those places where social cohesion with surrounding society is often limited or completely lacking, salafism gives young people group connections in which they feel safe and accepted. This process includes the great emphasis that salafists put on ‘us vs. them’. Salafists see themselves as the chosen people and regard all others as ‘unbelievers’ and ‘deviants’. By creating these oppositions, social cohesion with one’s own salafist identity is strengthened.

6.1.2 The ‘who’ question

The salafist strategy is to spread their da’wa as broadly as possible, without regard for nationality or colour. Indeed, salafists reject the concept of state and nationality. For the time being, it is still *primarily* second- and third-generation Moroccan boys and girls who feel drawn to this ideology. There are also more and more signals that Turks are becoming more receptive to the salafist message as well.¹¹⁰

110 National Coordinator for Counterterrorism, *Samenvatting Dreigingsbeeld Terrorisme Nederland 8* [see footnote 87 above], April 2007.

Slootman and Tillie (2006) were the first to carry out *scientific* research into the question of which Amsterdam Muslims are susceptible to Islamic radicalisation.¹¹¹ Their study demonstrates that Amsterdam Muslims who have a very orthodox religious interpretation *and* the conviction that politics and society treat Muslims and Islam unjustly have an increased chance of radicalisation. This concerns two percent of Amsterdam Muslims (roughly 1,500 people). These Amsterdammers are potentially the most susceptible to radicalisation. According to the study, the above-stated religious and political views are chiefly found among Muslim youths (16-18 years of age) with a secondary education level (mbo (intermediate vocational education), havo (upper general secondary education) or vwo (pre-university education)), who have a strong connection to their ethnic group, are extremely conscious of discrimination, are socially isolated and are greatly mistrusting of politics.

6.2 Forms of salafism

Salafism can manifest itself in society in various ways. The most visible forms of manifestation are the salafist centres, as discussed in Chapter Three and the jihadist networks as discussed in Chapter Four. Parallel to these forms, a salafist culture which is also visible on the street is becoming increasingly apparent. More and more Muslims are dressing according to the salafist code: men let their beards grow out and wear a *djellaba*¹¹² while women wear a *burqa*¹¹³, a *niqaab*¹¹⁴, a *ghimaar*¹¹⁵ or a *hijab*¹¹⁶. Little is still known about this salafist culture. How has the emergence of salafism changed communities? Do salafists participate in regular working life? Or have they established parallel economic structures? Do they go to the polls during elections? How do they spend their free time? Which newspapers do they read? Do they watch television? Which schools do they attend? Do they play sports? What is the significance of the Friday sermon for religious practitioners if we take into consideration the fact that these practitioners do not have a sufficient grasp of classical Arabic to follow the sermon? How do they deal with the strict rules of behaviour in practice? In other words, is there a difference between religious belief and religious practice? These are questions ('blank

111 Slootman and Tillie, *Processen van radicalisering. Waarom sommige Amsterdamse moslims radicaal worden* [Radicalisation processes. Why some Amsterdam Muslims are becoming radicalised], 2006.

112 A long, loose men's garment with long sleeves and a type of hood. It is worn down to the ankles. Nowadays it is also available in fashionable colours.

113 Full-length covering garment, with facial veil, Afghan model with gauze for the eyes.

114 Facial veil with a slit for the eyes, commonly in black.

115 Half-length head cloth.

116 Head cloth, head covering for women.

areas') which for a large part have yet to be answered.

It is clear, however, that salafist culture often deviates from the traditional culture of Dutch Muslims. In practice, this has led to some Moroccan youths in particular rebelling against the 'folk Islam' of their parents. They have developed new patterns of behaviour based on salafist dogmas, along with the accompanying language code, clothing style, standards and values. This leads not only to tensions within the family but to tensions in society as well. In this way, more and more salafist-oriented boys and girls are clashing with their environment because they refuse to shake hands with the opposite sex and because girls want to wear veils at school. The increase in the number of disputes about these subjects which are being submitted to the Commission for Equal Treatment (*Commissie Gelijke Behandeling*) illustrates this development.

In Chapter Two it is stated that salafists propagate a global 'pure Islam'. Roy (2004) speaks in this regard about *de-culturalisation*.¹¹⁷ According to him, salafists want to create an all-encompassing abstract global community of 'true believers', a so-called *imagined community* of the *umma*. This *umma* is also apparent on the Internet in the Netherlands. Young people address each other as 'brother' or 'sister' and feel involvement with 'brothers' and 'sisters' in other countries. It is not clear how this *umma* is being shaped in reality. Is it nothing more than a collection of (abstract) individuals or is there indeed a 'true community'? If so, what is this shared sense of community based on?

Another relevant question is to what extent young people who portray themselves as radical on the Internet actually are radical in reality. In some of the cases these young people do not actually follow any orthodox or jihadist lifestyle. At the present moment it is unclear what the emergence of this youth subculture means for the threat posed by radical Islam. The fact that orthodox and even jihadist variants of Islam are becoming fashionable also means that these variants are becoming vulnerable to dissipation and that these variants may even fall out of fashion over time.¹¹⁸ On the other hand, this youth subculture may lower the threshold to radical Islam and its ideas for young people.

117 Olivier Roy, *Globalised Islam: The Search for a New Ummah*, 2004.

118 National Coordinator for Counterterrorism, *Samenvatting Dreigingsbeeld Terrorisme Nederland 8* [see footnote 87 above], April 2007.

The foregoing indicates that there is little *factual* information about the actual manifestation of salafism in Dutch society. This *empirical* information is not only necessary to be able to better elucidate the phenomenon, but is also necessary to be able to formulate strategies for the social and security-related problems which salafism entails.

6.3 How wide-spread is salafism in the Netherlands?

Over 850 thousand Muslims live in the Netherlands.¹¹⁹ It is not known which percentage of these subscribe to the salafist creed. This is due to the fact that the Municipal Population Registers (GBA: *Gemeentelijke Basisadministraties*) do not contain any information about this. Up to the present day, no research surveys have been carried out to determine the number of salafists, though reliable models do exist in the social sciences which are suitable for estimating unregistered populations.¹²⁰ This report too contains insufficient data to actually reach a quantification. In any case, the four centres are each attended by several hundred practitioners. That doesn't mean, however, that these people can actually be classified as salafists; religious practitioners may also attend the centres for pragmatic considerations (because the mosque happens to be nearby, for example).

A press release by Al Waqf, dated 2 November 2006, is interesting in this regard because it states that the Al-Fourkaan mosque has more than 2,000 attendees. We also know that the number of attendees at the As-Sunnah can reach 1,500.¹²¹ These figures indicate that attendees to the four centres number several thousand *in total*. The General Intelligence and Security Service estimates that altogether the four centres can draw about 3,000 attendees to the Friday prayers.¹²²

119 www.cbs.nl.

120 See: Bevolking en Gezin, *Het aantal joden in Nederland anno 2000: een toepassing van alternatieve methoden om de omvang van niet-geregisteerde populaties te schatten* [The number of Jews in the Netherlands in 2000; an application of alternative methods to estimate the size of non-registered populations], 2001.

121 Haagse Courant, *Imam verbiedt vriendjes en vriendinnetjes* [Imam forbids children to have friends], 7 July, 2004.

122 General Intelligence and Security Service, *Radicale dawa in verandering. De opkomst van islamitisch neoradicalisme in Nederland* [see footnote 58 above], 2007.

We also know that the number of hardcore jihadists is relatively low and does not consist of more than a few hundred people.¹²³ The General Intelligence and Security Service takes into account that these people are prepared to (help) implement violent activities. Most of these extremists belong to jihadist networks of which the police and/or the General Intelligence and Security Service are aware.

Despite the lack of statistical data, the message of this report is that salafism has expanded greatly since 2005. This conclusion is based primarily on the increase in the number of lectures being held in the Netherlands via the four centres (see 3.4.1).¹²⁴ Besides this ideological influence, salafist forces are also attempting to actually take over more and more mosques and to establish new organisations and/or institutions. Furthermore, a clear increase is visible in the number of Internet sites of a salafist nature which are aimed at Dutch Muslims.¹²⁵

123 General Intelligence and Security Service, *De gewelddadige jihad in Nederland* [see footnote 107 above], 2006.

124 National Coordinator for Counterterrorism, *Vierde voortgangsrapportage terrorismebestrijding* [see footnote 76 above], June 2006.

125 National Coordinator for Counterterrorism, *Jihadisten en het Internet* [Jihadists and the Internet], January 2007.

7. Development trajectories of salafism in the Netherlands

As is evident from this report, salafism is a new phenomenon for the Netherlands. The question arises as to the future of salafism in the Netherlands. Is it a *hype* which will pass on its own? Or is rather a persistent phenomenon? Will salafism develop into a dominant factor in Dutch society? Or will it afterwards turn out to be (have been) a marginal school of thought within the Dutch Muslim community? Will salafists attempt to establish Islamicized districts or will a portion of salafists seek out dialogue and interaction with their environment?

This chapter does not presume to have answers to these questions (in so far as these questions can even be answered). Nor will *all* the factors which may influence the development of salafism in the Netherlands be indicated in this chapter. What this chapter *will* do is examine in greater detail those developments, dealt with in the previous chapters, which will be decisive for the future of salafism in the Netherlands. In this chapter the terms 'salafism' and 'salafists' refer to both the violent and non-violent variants of salafism.

7.1 Moderation and adaptation

An important development which has been visible since 2002 is that the (a)political salafist centres have taken a more moderate stance in public. In retrospect, we can conclude that the external pressure has had the desired effect. The question is how this moderation should be interpreted. Is it merely a façade intended to set 'unbelieving' society on a false trail? Or is it a sincere and permanent moderation of behaviour? Are (a substantial portion of) the (a)political salafists actually ready and capable of adapting their dogmas – which are often in conflict with the Dutch legal order – to their environment? Will the political salafists in the Netherlands engage in parliamentary democracy in emulation of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, for instance, in order for their voices to be heard – even if this is just out of pragmatic and strategic considerations?

A definitive answer to these questions cannot be given at the present time. Nonetheless, this moderation – whether sincere or not – is a positive development. The fact of the matter is that it demonstrates that the (a)political salafist centres are not immune to their environment. The external pressure seems to have partly drawn the centres out of their voluntary isolation, and they are increasingly seeking interaction

with their environment (community, police, neighbourhood and media). Also, no complete rejection of the constitutional state is evident in practice. Political salafists sometimes even openly defend the constitutional state.¹²⁶

It is probable that the moderation and signs of adaptation are inspired primarily by pragmatic considerations. (A)political salafists must be aware that they would lose a confrontation with their 'unbelieving' environment (which constitutes a majority) and that such a confrontation would result in repression. This means that over time the majority of (a)political salafists in the Netherlands will probably opt for peaceful coexistence¹²⁷ instead of conflict.

At the same time, we must not overlook the fact that even apolitical salafists do not fundamentally reject the use of violence. And in practice, the jihadists are not completely isolated from the other factions. The question then is whether the (a) political salafists will also abstain from violence in the Netherlands if circumstances change in their favour. In particular, a lifting of the external pressure may reverse the moderation observed.

7.2 Non-violent salafism: a social factor

Though social and political pressure has led to moderation, this pressure has not led to a containment of non-violent salafism. On the contrary, a strong expansion of this variant of salafism has been more evident since 2005. This variant's missionary zeal is apparently so powerful and dynamic in nature that it won't be stopped by external factors. The non-violent salafist forces apparently also have some flexibility to adapt to their environment. In other words it remains to be seen whether their message can be contained by external pressure. If a counterbalance to this influence is to be offered, this must occur first and foremost through a countermovement from within the Muslim community itself. The first signs of this countermovement are already visible; the question is whether this cautious development will persist.

126 For instance, in response to unrest in the Slotervaart district of Amsterdam, in October of 2007 imam Jneid called for the police in the district to be treated with respect (www.al-yaqeen.nl).

127 'Peaceful coexistence' in this context should be interpreted as efforts towards 'maintaining peaceful existence of two mutually exclusive systems side-by-side, whereby the ideological struggle is continued with public and secret methods'.

For the time being, it appears that non-violent salafism has developed into a social factor which has clearly increased in significance. Over time it may even develop into a factor of significance which society will have to learn to live with. Given the fact that non-violent salafists have a high level of organisation and actually represent a membership base, it may be expected that they will also be capable of mobilising this base. The fragmentation of the salafist message, however, also means that it is not probable that such a thing as one single salafist faction will emerge (see also Section 7.6).

7.3 Jihadism's lasting resilience?

Given the fact that up to the present day all significant terrorist waves have already reached their high point and have now lost significance, the resilience of the jihadist faction within salafism comes into question.¹²⁸ Will the divide between the intention and the potential of local jihadist networks in the Netherlands, as identified in this report, persist? Which effects will the arrest and detention of jihadists have on the development of the jihadist faction in the Netherlands in the long term? Will Dutch jihadists succeed in gaining greater autonomy in their ideological *know-how*? The answer to these questions will be decisive for the development of jihadism in the Netherlands.

7.4 European Muslims' link to hotbeds of conflict

As we can see from Chapter Six, salafists play upon Muslims' feelings of dissatisfaction and frustration about international conflicts involving Muslims. Examples of these so-called hotbeds of conflict are the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Thus, these hotbeds of conflict also constitute a significant *breeding ground* for the rise of salafism in the Netherlands (and abroad). The outcomes of these conflicts and the possibility of new hotbeds of conflict emerging will influence salafism's power of attraction, particularly among young people. The question is whether European Muslims (including Dutch Muslims) will follow the developments in the Middle East at a greater distance or whether, on the contrary, the current strong connection to their fellow believers will remain intact.

7.5 Effects of developments in Saudi Arabia on Dutch salafism

Another development taking place, particularly in Saudi Arabia, is an increased disunity within Saudi-inspired salafism. This was dealt with in detail in Chapter One. In

128 David C. Rapoport, *The Four Waves of Modern Terrorism*, in: *Attacking Terrorism: Elements of a Grand Strategy*, Audrey Cronin and James Ludes [ed], 2004.

particular, the terrorist attacks of 2003 were an incentive for Saudi Arabia to resort to extreme repression of the jihadist faction. These attacks additionally led to Saudi rulers having greater involvement in the international struggle against Islamic terrorism. There are even signs of a cautious readiness to redress the excesses of salafism; for example, texts have been removed from several school books which preach intolerance towards Jews and Christians. The Saudi state is also trying to get a better hold on the activities of NGOs to prevent humanitarian funds from ending up in the hands of violent groups. In any case, the question is, what the (future) developments in Saudi Arabia will mean for salafism in the Netherlands. Will these developments promote the moderation which has been observed and lead to a greater divide between jihadists and other factions?

7.6 Disunity diffuses the salafists' message

As we have seen in this report, the increased discord within salafism in Saudi Arabia is also visible in the Netherlands. This divisiveness may over time stand in the way of da'wa in the Netherlands. It indicates that there is no such thing as a single salafist entity: disunity weakens the power of the salafist message in the sense that the apparently all-encompassing and clear salafist message is diffused. The 2006 report by the Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR: Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid) entitled *Dynamiek in islamitisch activisme* (Dynamism in Islamic Activism) even argues that this discord has led, among other things, to Saudi-inspired salafism already being past its prime.¹²⁹

129 Scientific Council for Government Policy, *Dynamism in Islamic Activism*, 2006.

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